Healthy Rats and Sick People: Sickness, Healing and the Spirit World in a Manila Slum

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This thesis is entirely the original work of the author, based on research done between 1993 and 1999. Where the works of others have been cited, this has been clearly indicated in the text.

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(Peter Raftos)

Abstract

This thesis examines the beliefs about sickness, healing and the spirit world as they are held by the residents of a street and its immediate surrounds in an urban poor area of Manila. These slum dwellers perceive the world as being inhabited by a variety of entities with varying power and ability to inflict harm or work cures. The power of these entities tends to increase in proportion to the distance at which they normally reside from the field site. Thus, the areas around the home and within the neighbourhood are inhabited by entities with little power, while those at the periphery are generally the most powerful. This power, which is manifested through harmful or curative abilities, is examined in terms of movement: as the entities move towards Asogue Street, or as residents venture further away, the risk of harm or the hopes of cure increase. This movement is conceptual, and only indirectly related to physical distance.

In order to illustrate this view that power (and its associated curative or harmful aspects) increases with distance, residents' beliefs regarding the creatures which inhabit the spirit world; locally-held concepts of illness causation; and the various techniques and strategies employed by locals to prevent illness or effect cures are examined. In addition, a model of the world is formulated in which physical and conceptual distances are related to each other and to the entities which may be found at various distances from the centre, Asogue Street.

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Erratum

Please note that, due to a computer error, there is no page header on any of the pages in Chapter 4.

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Chapter 1: City Air Makes One Free[1]

The rain thunders on the metal roofs and the stormwater rises in flood. It is the rainy season, and I am with Gerardo, watching the flood waters drift past his house. The dirty, grey water carries various pieces of flotsam and jetsam: sticks, footwear, food, faeces. After a while, a drowned rat, bloated and soaked, floats past. Rats are a major problem for the slum dwellers of Manila. They get into the rice and the milk powder, they sometimes attack chickens, and they have been known to bite sleeping children and even adults. A cat or dog which shows a predilection for hunting rats is sometimes given preferential treatment to other pets. Rats are hunted and poisoned mercilessly, yet they are never exterminated. They seem to thrive under the adversity. Gerardo turns to me as the dead rat drifts into the street and, with a half smile, says in English, "You know, this is a nation of fat rats and thin people."[2]

Introduction

in Manila, each area, each street, each *kapitbahayan* [neighbourhood] is composed of people who know and are more-or-less intimate with one another, while beyond the boundaries of the neighbourhood is a world whose inhabitants are viewed with wariness and occasional hostility as outsiders.

At the same time, these areas where people know each other are unstable: although there are usually many long-term residents whose family names become known as being attached to a particular place, other people come to live in, and leave, them on a fairly regular basis. As well as being partially unstable, these areas are also extremely porous, as people have friends and associates in other parts of the city or beyond its limits, while those same people may not know neighbours from the same area or street, except by sight.

In some ways, these neighbourhoods (and I am generalising from a the handful of areas which constituted my fieldwork site) resemble bounded village communities, in which people are well aware of their identity insofar as it is tied to a particular place or settlement. Yet there is no village, with discrete borders or recognised limits, except those formed by major roads. Instead, the neighbourhoods are loci of interaction, vaguely tied to and recognised as being of a particular place: Asogue Street, the plaza, the cemetery, the squatters' area, Bisig.

Each locale may have its own street gang, and may even have its own basketball team, often formed from the street gang. People tend to carry out many of the affairs of daily life — shopping, social interaction, worship or the quest for healing — in close proximity to their homes, within or near the area to which they consider themselves to belong. Although they usually have strong links with outside areas (particularly through kinship, friendship, attendance at higher education institutes or employment), travel[3] is difficult in the congested streets of Manila, and not something to be undertaken on a whim, more likely as the result of an obligation.

Neighbourhoods have their own identities *qua* communities, however loose, fragmented and porous. While many informants told me that "the poor must stick together" and that "the poor must help each other because the rich stick together", it is also commonly held that one of the greatest dangers to safety and security are outsiders, themselves often poor. Outsiders are those who are not known in the area, and seem to have no obvious or good reason to be there, which suggests that they may be up to no good. If, as people told me, the poor must stick together, then it is apparently best if the poor stick with those they know — or at least recognise because they share the same neighbourhood. This attitude is reflected in Asogue Street residents' views of the spirits and other sickness-causing agents, a major theme of this thesis.

The residents of Asogue Street, and of other areas, seem to order their spatial group-identification in accordance with Suttles' observation of slum dwellers that:

> Each little section [of the city] is taken to be a self-sufficient world where residents carry out almost all their legitimate pursuits. A person who leaves his own area, then, is suspect so long as he has no visible and justifiable reason for straying from his home grounds. (Suttles 1968:15)

This seems to be borne out among the residents of Asogue Street: love them or loathe them, one must interact with one's neighbours every day, and at close quarters. They can not be merely shut out, and so it is easier for everyone if daily interactions with neighbours have at least the semblance of amicability, whatever the underlying reality. By the same token, outsiders who have no immediately obvious and good reason for being in Asogue Street are viewed with suspicion. It is prudent to assume that they are up to no good, and to watch them accordingly.

According to Lewis' (1959; 1967) concept of the "subculture of poverty" (often referred to simply as the culture of poverty), particular attitudes, ways of life or understandings of existence, wider society and one's place within them, are framed in part by conditions of material deprivation:

> Poverty becomes a dynamic factor which affects participation in the larger national culture and creates a subculture of its own. One can speak of the culture of the poor, for it has its own modalities and distinctive social and psychological consequences for its members[...] [T]he culture of poverty cuts across regional, rural-urban, and even national boundaries. (Lewis 1959:2)

Lewis argues that simply being poor does not create a culture of poverty, but that the conditions of poverty must also fulfil certain criteria.

> The culture of poverty can come into being in a variety of historical contexts. However, it tends to grow and flourish in societies with the following set of conditions: (1) a cash economy, wage labor and production for profit; (2) a persistently high rate of unemployment and underemployment for unskilled labor; (3) low wages; (4) the failure to provide social, political and economic organization, either on a voluntary basis or by government imposition, for the low-income population; (5) the existence of a bilateral kinship

> system rather than a unilateral one; and finally, (6) the existence of a set of values in the dominant class which stresses the accumulation of wealth and property, the possibility of upward mobility and thrift, and explains low economic status as the result of personal inadequacy or inferiority. (Lewis 1967:xl)

Under these conditions, there may arise a particular way of living, the culture of poverty. It will mostly tend to occur among people from lower socioeconomic strata who live in a society where the economic relations are rapidly breaking down or being transformed: such as during rapid technological change or subjugation by a colonial power (Lewis 1967:xli). Lewis stresses that the culture of poverty is most likely to arise among the dispossessed and particularly the urban poor — material poverty itself is a necessary but insufficient condition for the culture of poverty to come about. Mechanisms which help integrate the poor into wider society (or at least more strongly integrate them with each other) tend to alleviate the rise of the culture of poverty, as do mechanisms which grant the poor at least the illusion of a degree of autonomy and self-determination, in effect giving them a sense of belonging to the whole and building up their self-esteem (Lewis 1967:xliv-xlv).

Having briefly discussed the conditions under which the culture of poverty may arise, what exactly is it? Firstly, it is material poverty: an absence of things, of goods, of items. This absence is entirely relative to the wider society, in that where video cassette recorders and colour televisions are taken for granted or at least considered a usual accessory for the good life, their scarcity may indicate poverty, albeit a poverty which would be distinctly more comfortable than in places where war zones.

However, relative material poverty alone is insufficient: the culture of poverty is more a state of mind, a set of values, orientations or approaches to life. Lewis (1967:xlii-xliv) sums up the culture of poverty under four points. Firstly, the poor lack effective participation and integration into the major institutions of larger society. They are segregated and discriminated against, unemployment and underemployment conspire to create a deficit in the economic resources necessary to live "the good life" as defined by the wider,

middle class or elite-dominated society (nor do they necessarily aspire to these things, although they may pay lip-service to such ideals). They fear and are suspicious of society outside their own confines (this may, and does, include other urban poor in Manila) and the feelings are reciprocated. Much of their interaction with wider society is either demeaning (as in welfare) or fraught with danger — police, the court system and the other apparatuses of the state are perceived to be less institutions to aid them as to repress. Local solutions to problems are better than those which involve outsiders (or, at least, officially appointed outsiders), since it is preferable to keep the state and other outsiders where they belong, on the outside.

Secondly, social organisation beyond the nuclear and/or extended family is at a minimum. There may be voluntary associations, self-help groups or street gangs which cut across familial groupings, but otherwise there is very little formal organisation. This lack of organisation and specialisation tends to exacerbate the marginalisation of the poor in complex and specialised societies. According to Lewis (1967:xliii), "Most primitive peoples [*sic*] have achieved a higher level of sociocultural organisation than our modern urban slum dwellers." Although there is a paucity of social organisations in the slum, this does not mean that there is no sense of community: people know where they are from, and may well be loyal to that place (or, perhaps more accurately, loyal to the *idea* of that place).

Thirdly, Lewis suggests that early initiation into sex, a tendency towards consensual marriages and a relatively high incidence of the abandonment of wives and children, and an emphasis on uterine kin within the framework of a bilateral kinship network are all characteristic of the culture of poverty. At this point I would like to point out that, although the predictions outlined so far are more or less consonant with my own findings, I did not find a high incidence of marriage instability in my fieldwork site — admittedly, I have no quantitative data with which to back up this statement, merely my own impressions after living there. Nor do I have any data which suggests that children in Asogue Street were initiated into sex any earlier than Australian children — and marriages among the urban poor were a

good deal more stable than among the middle-class Australians with which I am familiar. Additionally, these are matters of degree, and it is possible that affluent, white North American marriages were relatively more stable than those which Lewis encountered in the field when he wrote during the 1950s and 1960s, while affluent Australian marriages are much less stable in the 1990s.

Finally, according to Lewis, individuals feel marginalised, helpless, dependent and inferior. They tend to live for the present, rather than plan for the future (the future being so uncertain, there seems to be hardly any point in planning). They tend to be provincial and parochial, most knowledgeable about the neighbourhood or their personal history, rather than the wider society or the world. Of course, this could be said of most people in most places, as Valentine (1968:60) has pointed out. In Marxist terms, they lack class consciousness, but "...are very sensitive indeed to status distinctions" (Lewis 1967:xliv).

Although the characteristics of the culture of poverty can occur in both the rural and urban settings, both Lewis and my own work have focused on slums and the urban poor. Certainly, I found that the culture of poverty could be at least partly applied to the rural poor in those areas of the Philippines outside Manila with which I am familiar; however, the main focus of interest is on the urban slum dwellers.

Although the characteristics which Lewis describes as constituting the culture of poverty seem to be applicable to some extent to social life in Asogue Street, I agree with Valentine (1968:48-77) when he argues that by focusing almost exclusively in each study on a few families who may or may not be representative of the social whole around them, and by leaving that social whole largely unexplicated, the reader is left with doubts as to just how generalisable the fieldworker's findings are.

In their neighbourhood, the residents of Asogue Street are in their own place. It may be a place where they intend to stay for a shorter or longer time: for life, or until they find a job elsewhere. Very rarely did I ever encounter anyone who believed that it was a stepping-stone, that they would

eventually move out and, with better employment, move "up" into the middle class, and into the more affluent precincts of Manila.[4] This is in contrast to the observation that residents of slums see those areas only as staging points as they acclimatise to the city after first migrating there from the countryside, a temporary arrangement prior to moving to more affluent areas (for instance, see Laquian 1969:23-26).

This thesis examines the beliefs regarding sickness and healing among a group of urban poor people who live in the general vicinity of one street in Metro Manila. In terms of theory, the thesis crosses a number of subdisciplinary boundaries within anthropology: urban anthropology, anthropology of religion and medical anthropology. Since it is not possible within the frame of a thesis to engage fully with the literature in each of the subdisciplines, I have chosen to focus initially on urban anthropology and to draw on other subdisciplines where they are particularly relevant.

Initially, anthropology studied groups in rural or wilderness settings: its main focus was peoples who could be categorised as "tribal", or at least non-urban. Small-scale social units or groupings like the village or the nomads' camp, in which people did not generally travel very far or often, and had little access to mass communication, were the anthropologist's bread-and-butter. Whether such isolation was fictive or not, it remains part of the "holistic" mind-set of anthropology (Friedl & Chrisman 1975:3-4). There was an assumption that at some level the community or society under study was an ahistorical, self-consistent whole, more-or-less uninfluenced by wider social formations. Anthropologists were not unaware of the external forces acting upon even the most isolated communities, an awareness displayed in Redfield's (1941) study of four Yucatecan settlements. In The Folk Culture of Yucatan Redfield examines four settlements, ranging from the urban capital to a rural hamlet in order to establish the degree to which what he presumes are older (Mayan or Spanish) beliefs and practices have been altered, based on the degree of urbanisation in each of the settlements. Redfield's study was one of the earliest to focus on urban life and, with the rapid urbanisation

of the world's population, anthropologists have increasingly studied social groups within an urban setting.

One of the first problems to confront urban anthropologists, as it has with sociologists and other social scientists, is how to define "the city": "Everyone knows what a city is, except the experts" (Miner 1967:3). Often the city, an "urban" locality, is delineated in contradistinction to another construct, described as "rural". A negative definition, the city is viewed as being not something else. Nor does this take into account whether the city has the same significance across societies or cultures (Tiger 1967). Perhaps the best definition, not of a city but of a city-dweller, is someone who typically does not supply their own food on their own land (Weber 1958:71). Although it is true that urban dwellers may grow some vegetables or raise small livestock in their yards, and few cash crop farmers also produce their own food, the distinction should be apparent.

Another problem which faces urban anthropology is whether or not there is anything particularly "urban" about the area or people under study. In approaching the city, anthropology has brought its usual toolbox (the study of circumscribed groups, small-scale fields of study, participant observation), and therefore has tended to focus on groups most amenable to study by means of these tools. Anthropology is more effective in scrutinising a small, bounded group, and anthropologists tend to seek out those who are marginal: the poor, the ethnic minority, the homeless, tramps.

This focus on the underside, on marginality, is also a reflection of one of the threads of interest in studies of urban life as conducted by the sociologists of the Chicago school in the 1920s and 1930s (Park 1967b, 1967c, 1967d; Wirth 1956; more recently Sexton 1965), which emphasised hoboes, juvenile delinquents and ghettoes (Jewish and other ethnically-based enclaves of the urban poor). The Chicago school pioneered the study of city inhabitants in terms of urban ecology, in which the city was seen as a field, within which various ethnic or sociopolitical groups vied for living space (Park 1967a; McKenzie 1967). The least powerful groups — the poor, the working class and migrants — were consigned to the less-favoured areas.

Over time, some groups acquired greater affluence, enabling a gradual colonisation of the more salubrious areas, until the city represented a patchwork quilt of ethnic and income groups, each occupying better or worse locales, their trajectory evident in the series of locations that group had occupied in previous generations.

The Chicago model has been criticised for its ahistoricity and over-simplicity, particularly for the degree to which it was based on the history and geographic arrangement of the city of Chicago itself (Hannerz 1980:19-58), a city with few natural features to impede or channel development. The Chicago model is also known as the Concentric Theory in geography. Its refinement is the Sector Theory, first touted in 1939, which pays more attention to transportation and the tendency for land-use patterns to repeat as a city expands (so that areas "behind" an exclusive neighbourhood — as seen from the city centre — would also be more-or-less exclusive neighbourhoods) (Johnson 1972:170-177). Neither theory pays specific attention to local history or geographical constraints (*ibid*:177-179).

Another criticism of urban ecology is the degree to which social relations can really be viewed in terms of Darwinian notions of "survival of the fittest": Gans (1975:201) argues that ecological explanations of social life are only really applicable if the subjects are unable to make life choices. Ecology describes human adaptation to the environment, but social phenomena are not solely the consequence of ecology (Gans 1975:201).

The Chicago school laid the foundations for social science research in an urban setting, particularly for sociology and, later anthropology. Yet it is questionable to what extent such studies were or are urban anthropology or sociology, as opposed to anthropology or sociology that just happens to be done in a city: studies run the risk of being merely anthropology *in* the city, not *of* the city (Fox 1975).

Hannerz (1980:3) makes a similar point when he states that:

> More often than not it [urban anthropology] is taken to include all the studies where the city is the locus rather than the focus. Ethnicity and

> poverty, for example, may occur *in* the city, but they are not by definition phenomena typical of the city.

Rather than undertaking studies of life typical of most middle- or upper-class urbanites, who may know people across the city or across the world but could not recognise their next-door neighbour, anthropologists tend to focus on what Gans (1962) has termed "urban villages", wherein "Everyone might not know everone else, but they know something about everyone else" (quoted in Hannerz 1980:5).

The nearest parallel to the rural village where the habitues know everyone else intimately and for their whole lives is the urban village, where everyone at least knows of everyone else in the vicinity. However, cities are open systems: even if urban life largely takes place in smaller universes, these universes are open to the other areas of urban life (Hannerz 1980:261). It is not that particular groups or residents lack ties to the rest of the city, but they lack the kinds of ties that adhere or persist (Epstein 1975:265). In South East Asia, the Indonesian *kampung* provides the clearest analogue to Gans' urban village, yet urban forms are qualitatively different. As Murray (1991:61) points out, the urban Jakarta *kampung* is not an extension of the village, nor can it be idealised as a kind of *kampung* — it is an assortment of individuals attempting to adapt to urban life. Guinness (1986) makes a similar point regarding the lack of tightly-knit community in Yogyakarta's urban *kampung*.

This disjuncture between the rural and urban villages has been made elsewhere, particularly with respect to the differing problems and opportunities offered by rural and urban settings: see Halpern (1961) for Laos, Textor (1961) for Thailand, and Agus (1994) for Malaysia. My own experience in Manila and rural Philippines suggests that the *barangay* of the countryside is far more a community than its urban counterpart.

Yet urban villages are certainly not artefacts of the anthropologist's imagination. The poor may be pushed into ghettoes, slums or shanty towns by the prevailing social, political and economic interests within the city (see,

for instance Davis 1990:223-228; Wirth 1956; Sexton 1965), or they may choose to live in particular places (Turner 1972; Wightman 1990). Again, as poor migrants from the hinterland, smaller cities or rural provinces further afield increasingly come to the big city in search of employment and a better life, they often seek out areas which have been previously colonised by family members or compatriots from their home territory. This process of migration to settled areas is often an important tactic of short-term survival for the newly-arrived nascent urbanite (e.g., Friedl & Chrisman 1975).

Such migration into areas already settled by kin or neighbours may lead to entrenched ghettoes; however, it may also be the jumping-off point for further diffusion of newcomers to the city, either as ethnic blocs (McKenzie 1967), or as a gradual mingling of the ethnic group members into the wider society (Gans 1962). Such a process may take several generations.

The poor and the ethnically marginal are not the only ones who may form their own enclaves: In Los Angeles, Davis (1990:223-228) finds that the wealthy and the middle class have gradually become entrenched in walled subdivisions, replete with electronic security devices and private police. In Manila, one need only tour the exclusive areas, such as Forbes Park, to see an entrenched and fortified "ghetto" of the wealthy.

It can be argued that every urban dweller, at some level, occupies an urban village: "...people do not live in cities or suburbs as a whole, but in specific neighbourhoods" (Gans 1975:200). True enough, although urban villagers in their specific neighbourhoods do not necessarily engage with neighbours at any more than the most rudimentary, reserved levels, and thus could hardly be considered to be constituting anything resembling a community.

Physical closeness (such as living within the same subdivision) does not necessarily lead to community feeling or self-identification: Simmel (1950:409-424) has argued that, partly in order to protect themselves psychologically and emotionally, urban dwellers succumb to the monetary forces which dominate the city scape and thus engage in relationships which

are reserved, utilitarian and based on cost-benefit analyses to some degree or other. There is an inherent reserve, he argues, in face-to-face interactions within the city, a refusal to become involved with other human beings as human beings, instead of as animated uniforms, professions or service and commodity suppliers/consumers. This in itself would tend to mitigate against any growth of community feeling among urbanites. The relative impersonality and instrumental nature of urban life has also been perceived by Wirth (1975) and Lewis (1975:345-246), when it is not seen as downright hostile to the marginal (Fox 1975:46). According to Wirth (1975:38), the greater impersonality of the city (compared to the countryside) can be seen in the extent to which time and motion are ruled by machines: "The clock and the traffic signal are symbolic of the basis of our social order in the urban world". While this may hold true in some of the world's metropolises, anyone who has lived in Manila can hardly be unaware of the enthusiasm with which its habitues ignore both clock and traffic signal.

Drawing on concepts of reserve and lack of involvement, Tamney (1975), undertook a sociological study of a Milwaukee slum in order to test whether or not physical closeness between slumdwellers led to greater involvement (positive or negative) in each other's lives. Although the findings did not support the case for physical closeness relating to social involvement, he did find that (rather unsurprisingly), the degree of involvement depended on similarities in culture, social standing, lived environments and world views.

Thus, physical closeness among the urban poor is not a strong factor in the development of community or lack of reserve among them. But that they are poor, that they face common problems, may do so.

The inhabitants of my field site are poor. They are in the ranks of that swelling population, the urban poor. Urban poverty takes many forms, with many degrees of relative affluence and prosperity: a Smokey Mountain squatter may be better-off in this respect than the rural poor in other settings, and many urban poor Australians or Americans live in conditions which, bad as they might be by the standards of those countries, still approach

something like luxury when viewed from the Manila dump or the streets of Calcutta. One distinction that has been drawn between the various types of urban poor relates to the tenure enjoyed by the particular group under discussion: slums or squatments (squatter settlements) (Epstein 1975:261-262). A slum is an area in which there is a high proportion of rental accommodation, coupled with a high incidence of absentee landlords. The accommodation is generally substandard (at least by the lights of the overarching culture) and slumdwellers are characterised by a high degree of insecurity of tenure. Since they do not own their homes, and are often liable to eviction at short notice, slumdwellers are not overly concerned with either improving their dwellings or acquiring a stake in the surrounding community. Fluidity of residence tends to mitigate against the growth of urban villages as expressions of community, rather than mere geographic locales. Where residents tend towards immobility, social solidarity is more likely to grow (Jacobsen 1975:358-375).

Squatters, by contrast, may be illegally residing on the land, but they consider that they own their houses, built with their own labour and materials acquired by a variety of means. Despite the ever-present possibility of enforced mass eviction, squatters are able to achieve a degree of security of tenure because few government agencies, at least in the developing world, have both the means and determination to evict squatters and then keep them evicted. Additionally, without needing to pay rent, they form a pool of cheap unskilled or semi-skilled labour which is often vital to the city's formal economy (Epstein 1975:270). Despite their apparently greater legal protection, slumdwellers may be seen as far more transitory than squatters: slumdwellers come and go, often to squatments, but the slums themselves tend to remain.

Lerner (1967) describes both squatters and slumdwellers as "displaced persons", arguing that through over-rapid attempts by developing countries to modernise, they have been displaced from traditional agricultural pursuits without being incorporated in industrial life (and, at the end of the Twentieth Century, one could add that they had not been

incorporated into post-industrial production). Although Lerner has isolated one aspect of the urbanisation process, he fails to take into account the role of the agents — the migrants who become displaced persons — in all this, regarding them as effects, and never causes.

Although the title of this thesis describes Asogue Street as a slum, it is in fact, under the terminological distinction outlined above, a squatment. Most residents are squatters, in that they occupy land on which they hold no legal title but also pay no rent. Much of the land is of unknown ownership (or the owner has not been heard of in decades). Since the squatment has been on Asogue Street for more than a generation, it is highly unlikely that the residents will suffer forced eviction. Although they are aware of it as a theoretical possibility, this has not stopped them making structural improvements to their homes as and when they are able to do so. Some residents rent out rooms or parcels of land to other newcomers (although rent of illegal water mains connections is more common). It is not a slum, but its residents describe it as one, a term used to distinguish the more established residential areas around the street from the "squatter settlement" behind the older compounds (which do not have any street frontage).

Although the residential population of squatments tends to be more stable than those of slums (where a significant proportion of the population intend to move to better areas or, at least, to areas where they are less susceptible to eviction), squatments are also characterised by a high degree of resident fluidity and variety. This variety is often blurred in studies of their residents, as Basham remarks:

> The tendency of most studies of squatter settlements to focus on aggregate and synchronic data tends to hide the personal and occupational variety of the inhabitants. (Basham 1978:182)

The urban poor in a particular area may appear in studies mainly or merely as representatives of particular occupations, particularly where such studies rely on statistical evidence. Although this thesis suffers from the synchronic

nature of much of the data — unavoidable when fieldwork consists of fifteen months, not fifteen years — a major preoccupation here is to show the great variety of people, attitudes, beliefs, ages, ethnic backgrounds and survival techniques employed by the residents of Asogue Street. There was no main source of employment, and there was no overwhelming ethnolinguistic group: residents came from different areas of the Philippines. In daily life they spoke a patois of Tagalog and English (Taglish). For almost nobody were these first languages.

The places where the urban poor (and anyone else) lives, where they work, socialise or are educated are, fairly obviously, imbued by their users with a range of emotional and symbolic significances, of greater or lesser intensity. This significance of a particular place or places to its past and present users highlights a significant distinction in the study of space and region (what has been dubbed "chorology" — Entrikin 1989:30): between the "general place", which is an example of a general class of space (a school, a park, a street), and a "specific place", which is defined in terms of individuality or uniqueness (Rugby School, *this* park, Asogue Street) (Entrikin 1989; for examples, see Muir and Weissman 1989; Samuels and Samuels 1989; Rutheiser 1993; and Low 1993). I would add that such uniqueness or specificity applies only to its past and present users, and uniquely to each individual: to others, these specific places may not necessarily carry any significance and so are still only general places.

While places are the geographic site of a community or, in the city, an urban village, place and community should not be confused (Agnew 1989). Although linked in many and multifaceted ways, the specific place in which a community exists is not the community itself. Further, specific places may contain yet other specific places, each with its own set of significances for users. And the significance or meaning attached to any given place by one group or individual may conflict with those ascribed by others: as McDonogh (1993) has remarked, public open spaces may be variously seen by different groups as valuable "air holes" for city dwellers and dog owners; dangerous areas where drug users congregate; or wasted land that could be profitably

developed (see also Cooper 1993 for an example of similar contested meanings on the Toronto waterfront).

Such contestations of meaning ascribed to a place may jostle along together or become open conflicts, in which one definition may eventually triumph, perhaps that of the most politically dominant group involved. This is as true for McDonogh's open space as for the various meanings attached to squatments.

Spaces or places do not exist in a vacuum: however they may be constituted, by their nature they end, and beyond that boundary there is another place or places. The boundary or frontier may be blurred, its precise meaning and geographic location may be contested, vary from person to person, or be sharply delineated and understood. That boundary is itself a place, a liminal zone where one passes from one ordered and settled area to another (even if that other is foreign to, and not properly understood by, the traveller). Cooper (1993:157-158) has described the frontier (in this context, synonymous with "boundary") as an edge between two zones or places with different uses and users. Central to the concept of the frontier is the sense of potential, that the ordered and known give way and that anything is possible.

Thus the frontier, the almost-place between or beyond the places which are known and understood, is where the exceptional, the unknown and the dangerous can occur: the place of adventure, the wide world. As with all other peoples in all other places throughout history, the residents of Asogue Street have their opinions about, beliefs regarding, and attitudes to the world beyond the frontier.

When outsiders come to Asogue Street or residents cross the frontier and go out into the wide world, there is a perceived increased risk of danger from the unknown potentialities of the outsider, or from the denizens of those other places, which may hold greater temporal or magical power than the average resident of Asogue Street. In general, the potential for danger increases the further away people go, particularly if it is to a place where they are not known and where they do not know others, and also if they have no specific business in going to these places. Note that, although

greater or lesser distances are partly expressed in terms of actual physical remoteness, the important yardstick for distance is really a conceptual one. Everyone has friends or relatives at some distance from home — even as far away as Australia, the United States or Canada — and most people are known in some other neighbourhoods. Rather, distance is measured to places where the individual feels he or she does not belong, because she or he is unknown there. These places may also be physically more remote, especially if one ignores regions outside Manila, but this is not a necessary characteristic of conceptual remoteness.

This increased potential for danger due to being out of one's place (whether going out into the world or strangers coming in to the local neighbourhood) resembes to Douglas' observation that dirt or impurity is merely matter out of its ascribed, proper place:

> If we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place. This is a very suggestive approach. It implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. This idea of dirt takes us straight into the field of symbolism and promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic systems of purity. (Douglas 1969:35)

As with dirt, so too with sources of danger, at least in the context of Asogue Street. In the every day world of government officials and strangers, sources of danger, like Douglas' definition of dirt, arise because of movements of things and people away from their ascribed conceptual places. In this sense, the phrase "conceptual places" can be taken as synonymous with a symbolic ordering of the world.

And just as danger arises in the mundane world because outsiders leave their ascribed places or locals leave theirs, danger in the spirit world arises because people encounter those entities on the entities' "home turf".

Among the residents of Asogue Street, danger is reflected in the perceived likelihood of suffering sickness or injury. Since harm usually takes

the form of physical injury or illness, it is meaningful to discuss danger in terms of sickness, and related techniques of healing. If we take "medicine" as being synonymous with people's prevailing attitudes and beliefs towards sickness and healing (of which the Filipino spirit world is an integral part), and the system or systems of diagnosis and treatment which derive from these and in turn help modify them, then the following quote sums up why I wish to investigate questions of poverty and self-esteem in terms of danger and distance and, even more specifically, in terms of medicine:

> Medicine is an exquisitely sensitive indicator of the dominant cultural characteristics of any era, for man's [*sic*] behavior before the threats and realities of illness is necessarily rooted in the conception he has constructed of himself and his universe. Every culture has developed a system of medicine which bears an indissoluble and reciprocal relationship to the prevailing world view. The medical behavior of individuals and groups is incomprehensible apart from general cultural history. (Pellegrino 1963:10, quoted in Foster and Anderson 1978:39)

"Medicine", then, is a barometer — or, to extend the medical analogy, a thermometer — of people's individual and collective attitudes towards, and constructions of, reality. The system or systems of medicine to be found in a society can, if we know how to read them, provide valuable insights into people's world views, their hopes and fears and dreams.

Medical practice and thought is composed of a number of systems within any society. Different groups or subcultures will have their own prevailing beliefs and ideas: not everyone will be familiar with an entire corpus of knowledge or fully convinced of the accuracy of that corpus or the validity of its underlying assumptions at any particular time. Additionally, where knowledge is not codified and people are economically or socially stressed (such as in the culture of poverty), much knowledge may be lost and so systems will become even more a set of patchwork contingencies than they were initially (although earlier models, due to long use and custom, may have achieved a semblance of wholeness, completeness, closure).

"System" suggests systematisation: officially-recognised training, accreditation processes, even a written codification of knowledge. It has little

to do with small-time village or neighbourhood healers, and even less to do with the patients, particularly if they do not share in the hidden wells of knowledge in such a system. Compare with Polunin (1977:85):

> A system of medicine is a set of ideas, values and practices concerned with health and disease, involving adepts whose special competence is recognised by at least a section of the population at large.

A set of ideas, values and practices may not be *systematic*, although Polunin would claim that the set still constitutes a *system*. Further, while medicine (as I have defined it) can be *a* useful indicator of aspects of a society, it is neither the *only* possible thermometer, nor is it necessarily going to be a particularly accurate one, since individuals within any society or movement are highly variable:

> Ideas can be presented systematically; people, happily, can't. Almost by definition, a true grassroots movement is populated by people who contradict each other, who don't follow the party line, or who don't even know what the party line is. (Basil 1988:11)

Care must be taken to not totalise or assume that "systems" are in any way systematic or stable if they are not codified in the pages of a book (and possibly not even then). Even if it is possible to present ideas systematically, this does not mean that the ideas *are* systematic, merely that they appear to be so.

> It is misleading to think of ideas such as destiny, witchcraft, *mana*, magic as part of philosophies, or as systematically thought out at all... Like other institutions they are both resistant to change and sensitive to strong pressure. (Douglas 1969:89)

Just as with Basil's grassroots movements, so too with life itself: in any set of ideas or beliefs, there will always be people who contradict each other, who do not toe the consensual line, or who do not know what that line should be. And this raises an important point in my approach in this thesis, and to fieldwork generally: at various points, I make generalisations about what the

Asogue Street residents may believe or do. This should not be taken to mean that I consider a particular belief to be held by all sectors of the population at all times and with a complete (or high degree) of assent and comprehension. Rather, the reverse is more likely to be the case: some people believe some things some of the time and even then, they are probably not sure. There are patterns which can be observed, however dimly, and it is these patterns, regular and suggestively predictable modes of belief or behaviour, to which I refer whenever I generalise.

To return to the question of medicine. In part, this thesis draws on ideas and orientations from the realms of medical anthropology, and it is at this point that I will situate this thesis within that theoretical domain.

According to Kleinman (1980:72), ailments can be separated into two broad categories: illness (or sickness) and disease. A disease is a malfunction of biological and/or psychological processes, the bald fact of something being wrong with the organism, itself viewed purely as a mechanism. Illness, by contrast, is the psychosocial experience of, and culturally-influenced meanings attached to, an illness. Although this appears to create an opposition between Western medicine as being able to objectively distinguish malfunctions ("diseases") from socio-culturally and personally-bound symbolic orders attached to those malfunctions ("illnesses"), it can also be used to distinguish between the base line of a malfunction in the organism (which possibly lies at the heart of every illness, whether caused by objective or subjective factors) and the symbolic order and meanings attached to a particular, non-healthy state (what makes for "healthy" here would vary from time to time and place to place). Another way to describe this distinction is the difference between "...a culturally interpreted symptom — as opposed to a culture-bound syndrome..." (Low 1994:141). I understand this to mean that the former is a culturally-informed understanding of the symptoms generated by an organic dysfunction or infection, while the latter is a culturally-generated psychosomatic illness.

The distinction between illness and disease tends to be extended into an opposition between two curative models, Western biomedicine on the one

hand and "folk", to use Leslie's (1974:93) term, or indigenous healing as well as psychotherapy on the other (Connor 1990; Helman 1990:86-93; Danforth 1989:52-56; Bamber 1987:180; Young 1982; Kleinman 1980:243; and Fabrega 1974). It is argued that the former is objective treatment of a disease, while the latter forms involve little more than symbolic manipulation, if a form of manipulation that may be therapeutically effective:

> Religious healing involves ritual performances that move people metaphorically from sickness to health. It is the power of the healing metaphors that gives healing its therapeutic efficacy. (Danforth 1989:56)

From the illness-disease distinction, Kleinman has gone on to the concept of "somatisation" (1986:2,52). Somatisation is the connection between symptom and society: the way in which social and personal stresses are experienced or expressed through the medium of the body. In other words, it is like the placebo effect reversed: rather than an individual's attitude helping to promote healing, somatisation also serves as the process whereby attitudes and problems tend to promote illness, the appearance of sickness indicators, and possibly also real physical dysfunctions ("disease"). Somatisation and the placebo effect raise a question: if an individual's culturally-informed attitudes are partly affected by disease, and this in turn can affect the functioning of the body for healing or deterioration (or to increase the likelihood of one or the other), what is the mechanism by which this can occur?

It has been argued that the body-mind distinction (or the distinction between physical condition and symbolic manipulation) is merely a Western construct (Jackson 1983:328), and that by dissolving this, the problem is solved (cf. Scheper-Hughes & Lock 1987). Psychosomatic affects may operate through the functioning of the endocrine gland or the hypothalamus, which may act as mediators between the brain and the rest of the body (see, for instance, Moerman 1979; Butl, Epton and Wavell 1988:16); or "psychosocial stress exacerbates the consequences of disease" (Browner, Ortiz de Montellano and Rubel 1988:686; Rubel 1964:120) across cultures,

with stressors being at least partly culturally-based. Health and disease are as much cultural as they are biological (Lieban 1974:15).

"The problem of how shamans heal has, in the past, been phrased in terms of the mind-body dichotomy: How can symbols affect physiology?" Moerman (1979:6). How symbols can affect physiology, if indeed they can, is less important in anthropological terms than that they are *believed* to affect physiology, and that such beliefs are embedded in culture.

For the purposes of this thesis, the terms "sickness" and "illness", "ailment" and "malady" will be used interchangeably. They refer to a number of states which are recognised by the residents of Asogue Street as being "unwell" [Tagalog: *sakit*]: that is, outside a variety of states which are recognisably healthy (for instance, a hangover, which will clear up of its own accord, would at best be considered a temporary ailment, and is more likely not to be considered an ailment at all). "Recognisably healthy" is a problematic term: to be healthy, outside the simple question of whether or not the organism is functioning correctly, will vary from time to time and place to place.

It is true that these definitions of "healthy" and "unhealthy" are circular: to be unhealthy is to be "not healthy" and to be healthy is to be "not unhealthy". Although this may smack of sophistry, the intent is not deceive. Rather, with the exception of a few borderline cases, the average resident of Asogue Street can quickly recognise health or ill-health in themselves and others, without having to define these states. There may be characteristics which are normally to be found in particular instances of good and bad health, but the two states are effectively two sides of the same coin. Certainly, ill-health is perceived to be a departure from the norm of good health, but for certain individuals (particularly the aged), suffering from one or another malady and therefore being in near-constant bad health is the usual state.

Any attempt to define health and ill-health which would hold across all or even most cultures (without using a specifically Western biomedical model) will always come up against the difficulty that the range of possible

healthy and unhealthy states is huge and contradictory. However, within a given cultural context, the range is small enough that whether someone is sick is unproblematic to most people. Health, like its absence, is as much a question of culture and circumstance as it is dependent on the actual physical or psychological state of an individual (Alland 1966:48; Danforth 1989:52-54; Wirsing 1985:315). However, for the purposes of this thesis, the problems of what precisely is a base line of "being in good health" need not be examined in over-much detail, since residents in my fieldwork site were more-or-less in agreement as to what constituted health. To be vital, to be active and — preferably — to have a decent (but not too great) layer of body fat indicated good health to Asogue Street residents, and it is this general definition of good health which I will use. One became sick for a variety of reasons, and these might be terminal or acute; however, in their absence, one was basically healthy. Of course, being healthy was also age dependant: sixty-year-olds were not expected to be as active as those forty years their junior.

In a number of cases I was confronted with examples of people becoming sick or being healed in a manner which I could not easily explain in terms of the Western medical models which form a part of my own belief systems (which are no more systematic than those of my informants). How could belief in an attacking spirit (I do not believe they exist) possibly cause severe sickness, or how could saliva rubbed on someone's forehead clear up a stomach ache? My own solution to the question of how to explain things in my framework of beliefs about the nature of the universe was to not try. There is no solution for me, unless I choose to believe that the spirits and the powers of healers really do exist; *or* attempt to explain such effects in terms of "placebo effects", "psychosomatic illness" and so on. I cannot give the mental and emotional assent necessary to believe in spirits (although I attempted to respect the beliefs of others), nor do I wish to re-cast the explanations of sickness and healing supplied by Asogue Street residents in terms with which I am more comfortable. More to the point, I have no training in medicine or psychology, and prefer to avoid explanations that rely on the

placebo effect or other physiological or psychological mechanisms. I do not understand how the placebo works, and it seems to me to an attempt to describe a mystery by giving it a name: applying a label to an ill-understood phenomenon in no way serves to clarify it. Rather, this thesis will consider healing and sickness in terms of belief and social significance, rather than physiological or psychological mechanisms.

Therefore, I simply accept the indigenous symbolic order (chaotic and disorganised as it is) as being more-or-less believed by informants, and try to question it on its own terms, rather than on mine. I am not so much interested in what is "really" happening (in Western biomedical terms) in, say, a case of spirit possession, as attempting to understand it within its own symbolic order, and in terms of its social and cultural ramifications. In this, my approach can be categorised as "ethnomedical", to use Fabrega's (1974:167) sense of this term. I want to stress that I do not question the reality of organic damage *per se*, nor would anybody who lives in Asogue Street: "Organic malfunction and infection are real enough, and *very* material" (Worsley 1982:822). Rather, I critically accept the Asogue Street residents' definitions and interpretations of the significance of that damage.[5]

Statement of Intent

This thesis is an examination of the perception among Asogue Street residents that greater power is to be found the further away (in conceptual distance) one travels from that street. Danger is a function of that power: the greater the power, the greater the likelihood that the holder of that power may act to harm, and that the effects of harmful behaviour will be more dire. One becomes endangered in one of two ways: by moving to the sources of greater power, and thus leaving one's own place, or by attracting the attention of the wielders of power, who then move closer, from their own appropriate places. Specifically, I examine this concept of increased danger resulting from movement to or from Asogue Street — the "correct" place for Asogue Street residents — in terms of sickness-causing agents such as bacteria, the spirits or sorcery. Thus, "increased danger" stands for greater likelihood, and greater severity, of illnesses. The illnesses in question result

from the activities of sickness-causing agents, and operate within a framework of movement: movement from Asogue Street to other places, or the movement of entities from the outside world into Asogue Street.

Nature and Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is not only a partial record and analysis of the beliefs and ways of life of a groups of people living in and around a particular street in one of the Manila slums. It is also a record of the fifteen months during which I lived on that street. Without my presence there, this thesis could not have been written, any more than it could have been written if there was no Asogue Street.

I have deliberately minimised the use of analytical models, preferring instead to analyse the data I present only far enough to illuminate or support my argument. I have done this because I believe that the data speaks for itself and also because I do not wish to draw out every possible strand or shade of symbolic significance — I want to try to preserve at least some of that freshness and immediacy which I felt while in the field. Where I have drawn up my own theoretical models, I have indicated in the text where this was done while I was in the field, and so I was able to obtain the opinions of informants. However, my main argument has not received such constructive criticism from the residents.

Additionally, I have largely ignored the relationships between Asogue Street residents and the wider societies of Manila and the Philippines, or the relationships with the state itself, except where I feel they are directly germane to the subject-matter of the thesis. I do not attempt to extrapolate from Asogue Street to the rest of the society (although I am reasonably confident that slum life across Metro Manila would display similarities with life in Asogue Street, allowing for different geographic, ethnolinguistic and material situations), or situate it structurally within the state. I prefer to focus on the lives of the people who live in the street, and on their beliefs, rather than on relating these to wider society. Asogue Street is neither a completely closed-off community, nor a totally porous one: its residents are wary of elites, and have been marginalised and disenfranchised by them. If elite or

"mainstream", middle class society appears to be non-existent in this thesis except as a powerful and somewhat malevolent force to be avoided by the people of my field site, then this is because that is how I understand the residents of Asogue Street to apprehend the political and economic power of the state. In this, my findings concur with those of Keyes (1974:22) in the Maligamgam squatter settlement: "The government, for these people, represents an enemy at the gates, about to sack and destroy." Asogue Street is not an isolate, but in certain ways, it *is* isolated. Except for the possibility of the state acting to harm the residents of Asogue Street, the residents in many ways see themselves as largely separate from it.

I have attempted to avoid imposing a totalising, authoritarian tone, or unduly exoticising or dramatising my field site (see Rosaldo 1986; Said 1978; Olivier de Sardan 1992; Errington & Gewertz 1989). Most of the time, daily existence was pretty dull for both myself and others: television and gossip provided the main sources of entertainment (although I was careful only to listen to gossip, never pass it on). Although I was in the field site, I did not see everything, I was not privy to everything that went on, and I did not understand all of what I did perceive, even when I was the recipient of patient explanation. I do not wish to claim any sort of authority as an all-seeing anthropologist: my fear is not those gaps in my knowledge of which I am aware — I have signposted these throughout the thesis — but those gaps in my knowledge of which I am not aware. It is true that I was there and that I saw some things and heard others, but I know that I missed a great deal, and was often not even aware of what I may have missed until long after my period of fieldwork had ended.

I do not wish to attempt to be the central character in this thesis. The authorial "I" in the ethnographic material is merely to indicate my presence at events. Sometimes I was the patient of a healer, and in general I tried to participate in daily life as frequently as I observed it. The central characters are the residents of Asogue Street, and the occasional appearance of myself in the text is intended to situate the author within the frame.

There are no tales of rapport in these pages, because there was no event in which my status as outsider changed and I began to be entrusted with "real" data. Almost everyone I met was friendly and tried to be helpful from the start. At what point this changed from polite helpfulness to warm concern for my project was imperceptible to me, and varied from person to person (sometimes it never occurred). Anyway, I was never a complete outsider, just as I never became any more an insider than any Australian who valued their own culture could: I am distantly related by marriage to many of the people who lived in my home compound in Asogue Street, and although I was too distantly related to be considered kin under normal circumstances, my neighbours chose to telescope the relationship and treat me as a kind of cousin. In status terms, I was roughly on a par with the unmarried men in their twenties (after all, I was both unmarried and in my twenties at the time), but with special privileges in that I could mix freely with my elders.

Finally, it is important to remember that not everyone believes everything all of the time. People change their opinions, they acquire new beliefs or drop old ones. On occasion, people I interviewed would change their opinions over the course of a single sentence. I could not, with any real confidence, say that under a given set of conditions, a Filipino will take a particular course of action. Individuals with whom I am very familiar are a different matter — and even they can be surprising. This is not to suggest that, based on my fieldwork, I have absolutely no confidence in my ability to predict behaviour or responses; rather, I have a healthy respect for the sheer range of possibilities and the ever-present promise of equivocation, of changing one's mind, and of a refusal to do anything at all. I do not write "All Filipinos do *x*", and I feel uncomfortable with the statement that "Most Filipinos do *y*". Within Asogue Street, I can say with confidence that "Sometimes, some residents do *z*". In other words, I am aware that patterns of behaviour or belief are really minority events, but I hope that I have identified the most significant of these minority patterns.

Even though people say they believe one thing and do another, this does not mean that they are dishonest or superstitious. I, as a highly-educated middle class white Australian, do *not* believe that the number thirteen is unlucky, or that walking under ladders can bring bad luck. Yet, to be honest, I avoid both. I do not really believe in such folktales, but at the same time, I do not believe in tempting fate on such matters. Someone who says they do not believe in sorcery but wears a protective amulet may well be doing the same thing: they do not believe, but their refusal to believe might be wrong — it is better to be safe than sorry.

In conducting fieldwork I used basic participant-observation techniques on a daily basis. I rarely visited people in their homes without at least a casual invitation. Instead, I preferred to sit by the local corner stores and chat with neighbours (these are regular congregation-points for most people). As people became more conversant with my research interests, they would suggest people that I might talk to, and if I did not already know these people personally (sometimes they lived some distance away from Asogue Street), others would almost always offer to introduce me. Since I take shorthand, I carried around a small notepad and was usually able to take down notes at the time. For more formal, semi-structured interviews I also used shorthand and memory — although I possessed a tape recorder, I rarely employed it because I found that most interviewees were not as talkative if they knew the machine was on.

This thesis begins by introducing Asogue Street, followed by discussions of sickness, healing and the spirit world. Lastly, I return to concepts of distance and danger. Chapter 2 introduces Asogue Street, my fieldwork site, and some of the people who live there. This chapter also describes the physical setting of Asogue Street, the social and cultural aspects of life on that street. In addition, the history of Manila and the Philippines, as it pertains to Asogue Street, is presented both as a top-down view and through the reminiscences of one of the area's oldest surviving residents.

Chapter 3 introduces some basic concepts relating to the spirit world in Manila, particularly how they relate to the rest of reality, their individual natures and how people protect themselves from the spirits. Chapter 4 examines the nature of illness, particularly how people become unwell, and the different causes of those illnesses. In Chapter 5, the various modes of healing are examined, as well as a discussion of the usual process by which individuals arrive at a cure or a particular course of treatment for various sicknesses. While Chapters 3 and 4 introduce the types of illness and their various causes, Chapter 5 deals with the solutions to those problems. Chapter 6 examines illness and healing, as well as sources of danger and power (which are intimately bound up with sickness, healing and the spirit world) in an idiom of distance relative to Asogue Street. In order to illustrate the extent to which aspects of being urban poor in Manila recur elsewhere, Chapter 7 includes a comparison with ethnographies from Indonesia, Bangkok and Papua New Guinea. This chapter concludes the thesis and discusses sick people and healthy rats.

Conventions Used in this Thesis

There are a number of language and terminology conventions applied throughout this thesis, which I will briefly cover here. In Tagalog, each vowel, and most consonants, are pronounced distinctly. There are no silent letters. In addition, there are a number of sounds borrowed from the Spanish, which generally use Spanish spellings. However, Tagalog spelling can be quite variable, depending on whether the word is found as a piece of graffiti, in a newspaper, or in an academic treatise. In the former case, spellings tend to be more phonetic than formally "correct". In addition, there are a number of English loan-words (especially American English). Their spellings generally follow the phonetic pronunciations.

Thus:

oo	pronounced as in "thorough" without the "r" sound, *not* as in "boot" or "foot". Vowels not separated by a consonant are usually pronounced separately.
ll	pronounced as "y" sound in English.
p/f	both pronounced as "p" — there is no "f" sound in Tagalog
b/v	both pronounced as "b" — "v" is lacking in Tagalog.
ñ	as in Spanish ñ.
d/r	tend to be interchangeable. Often, where a syllable beginning with "d" is repeated, it will be replaced with the "r" sound. Thus, *dadating* becomes *darating*.
ng	always pronounced as in "ring".

But:

au	often melded to the sound of "ou" in "crouch".

Additionally, although Tagalog is an ungendered language, loan-words from Spanish (and occasionally English) are assigned a gender on the Spanish model. Thus:

Tito/Tita	Uncle/Aunt
Amerikano/ Amerikana	American male/American female

Tagalog words do not follow this distinction:

Ate/Kuya	Older sister/Older brother
Binata/Dalaga	Unmarried male/Unmarried female

"Taglish" is a meld of English and Tagalog, generally using Tagalog grammar and syntax, but with a large variety of English words employed. Often, an English word is used if it is more convenient to the speaker, especially if the Tagalog equivalent is a longer word. It is similar in concept to Franglais.

Most Filipinos speak at least three languages with some degree of fluency, usually English, Tagalog (both of which are taught in the school system) and a provincial tongue. In my field site there are common phrases or turns of speech which everyone employs and generally occur either in English or Tagalog. Where these are mentioned in the text, a parenthesised

letter is appended to indicate the vernacular in which the phrase is uttered: (E) for English; (V) for Visayan; and (P) for Pangasinanese. All other italicised words are Tagalog or Taglish. Word games and double entendres based on similar-sounding words across languages are quite popular. Although errors in language are my own, these are based on common use in Asogue Street: Taglish was the language of everyday speech, but it was used by people for whom neither English nor Tagalog were first languages.

Apart from extended quotations from other writers, which should be obvious in context, all indented sections of the text are taken from field notes. I have not distinguished between data collected in an interview, written down at the time of an event, or recorded later from memory. In all cases, information supplied to me was translated as best I could into English (where I was told things in another language). In most cases, the authorial "voice" — the identity of the informant telling the story — is explicitly indicated. Where this is not obvious from the context, then the authorial voice is my own. Since much of the data were recorded in short hand, the quoted sections are often reconstructions, rather than pieces of writing lifted unexpurgated from my field notes. However, only material which appears in square brackets ("[ ]") represents what I consider to be later interpolations, added only for sense or clarification.

When referring to the conurbation of Metro Manila, I use this term and the simpler "Manila" interchangeably. When referring to the original city, without the surrounding municipalities, I use either "Manila" or "Old Manila". Although I use the term "Manila" to refer to two different areas, exactly what part of the urban area I am concerned with at the time should be obvious from the context. Questions of the exact geographic limits of Metro or Greater Manila, or how one defines these limits, are not important for this thesis (for a discussion of this, see Abueva, Guerrero & Jurado 1972:1-7).

Before considering the beliefs of the urban poor with regards to danger and distance, as evinced by their lore regarding sickness, healing and the spirit world, it is necessary to give a brief introduction to the historical and physical world which the residents of Asogue Street inhabited. The

following chapter begins with a subjective description of an average day in Asogue Street — in other words, the details of daily life which occurred regularly, excluding those events which serve to make one day different from another. Following this is a description of the physical parameters of the field site: where it is and what geographic features exist there, plus background information on the lives of Asogue Street residents such as family size, sources of income and ethnicity.

Chapter 2: The World of Asogue Street

The Physical Setting

Twilight never lingers in the tropics: as dawn approaches, it seems almost as if the day is hurrying the night along. There is blackness in Asogue Street, then the briefest grey, and then the sun begins to rise above the factory walls along the side of the street opposite the residential area.

The shopkeepers are the first people on the street, in the pre-dawn blackness. Half-awake, perhaps hurriedly gulping their first coffee of the morning — black, with several tablespoons of sugar to sweeten it (cheaper than milk powder) — they raise the metal or wooden shutters on the front of their *sari-sari* stores and turn on the fluorescent lights inside, indicating that they are open for business. *Sari-sari* means "variety", and these small, one-family owner-operated stores sell just that: variety. Most things that are needed in daily life can be bought there, from cigarettes, rice and infant formula to gin, stationery and junk food. The stores, which can be found every few houses on almost any residential street in the poorer areas of Manila, either provide a livelihood for a family, or are operated as a "hobby" by the slightly wealthier in order to supplement the main household income. On Asogue Street the *sari-sari* stores did not compete with each other by lowering prices. As far as I could ascertain, this mutual lack of competitiveness was based on an unspoken agreement, almost certainly a result of the Filipino tendency to avoid confrontation with one's peers wherever possible. By not competing, they avoided the possibility of friction with their neighbours. The set price for most items was not much greater than that for which they were sold at the nearby Sangandaan market, where most of the stores bought their produce in bulk.[6]

While the *sari-sari* stores have been opening for business, the other households have been awakening. For those with jobs, it is often necessary to be up and ready to leave the house up to two hours before they are due at work, in order to negotiate the chaotic traffic of Metro Manila. As people

waken, they take down the plastic, four-colour mosquito nets and then fold the sheets and plastic mats which serve most people for beds. If there are children sleeping with their parents under the net, the bedding is left up a little longer so that the little ones can doze undisturbed.

The mosquitoes are busy, too: although not as bad as they will be in the evening, they are a nuisance. To sit still for too long is to invite up to a half-dozen bites within minutes.

In houses in every compound in the street, portable gas stoves, the standard cooking device, are lit. A child or teenager will be sent down to the nearest store to buy the food to go with the breakfast rice. Water must be boiled for coffee, and the remainder of the hot water is poured into thermos flasks for hot drinks or baby's milk during the day. Then rice is cooked, and the *ulam*, or side dish, for breakfast. This might be dried, salted fish, or an egg fried in coconut oil, or instant noodles, or hot dogs. In households without a regular source of income, breakfast may be just rice, flavoured with tomato ketchup or milky coffee.

In the meantime, those with jobs are having their baths. There are few shower fittings: in most bathrooms, water is kept in a bucket and this is ladled out with a small scoop fitted with a handle. For those houses with no connection to the water supply, someone must go to one of the communal pumps and fill several buckets of water for drinking, cooking and washing.

As the family members get up to face the new day, to prepare for work or school, the *sari-sari* stores are doing a roaring trade. Although many families own a refrigerator, these are generally not used to store food. There are a number of reasons for this: it may be that the electricity the refrigerator uses is more than the family can afford; or that the family can not afford the outlay necessary to buy a large quantity of groceries at one time. Most families do not buy all their food needs once a week or once a fortnight; instead, they purchase food on an *ad hoc* basis, just before each meal is to be prepared. There is always a *sari-sari* store close by, and chicken, fish and pork are sold every afternoon from stalls set up on a nearby street.

Asogue Street is in a low-lying area of Manila, fairly close to the coast. Slightly to the west of the street, nearer the ocean, is an area that was used for fish farms, but which were recently filled in to make way for construction of what people variously called a factory or warehouse. People say that a group of Chinese[7] businessmen built the factory illegally, but as these businessmen have friends in the municipal offices, nothing can be done about it.

Landfill from the construction has blocked much of the area's natural drainage. During construction of the warehouse, in early 1994, water began to seep into the compounds off Asogue Street (the compounds are a little lower than the street). The sluggish, brackish water rose a few millimetres each day, gradually moving into family enclosures and threatening to pour into people's houses. The area around the houses became the perfect environment for mosquitoes to breed and to multiply at a frightening rate. What had once been only a nuisance now became a serious problem: at night, if a person stood outside a house and waved their hand, they could feel the thick clouds of mosquitoes slamming into their palm. Mosquitoes formed black columns above people's heads.

In some places, the water became deep enough for mudfish to find their way into the compounds. Armed with electrodes attached to bamboo poles and wired to car batteries, young men would hunt the mudfish in the spaces between houses, to provide fish for the evening meal or a tasty side-dish for a drinking party.

In order to walk along the compounds without having to step into the ankle-deep, dirty water or into the thick, viscous mud below it, stepping-stones and planks liberated from building sites and junk yards were laid down. Despite this, it was virtually impossible to travel during high tide, when water would back up in the canals, and from there into the compounds, without wellingtons. At high tide, the water rushed into the compounds, covering the makeshift flagstones and wooden bridges.

Following lobbying from the residents of Tugatog, the local Senator (a cousin and enemy of the mayor) managed to get a canal dug so that the

water drained. Despite this, high tides were still a nuisance, and the mud never really dried. During the rainy season there would be floods, sometimes as often as twice a week, where the water rose high enough to pour into people's houses to ankle or calf depth, depending on the elevation of the house.

Through this miasma of black, stinking mud and filthy, brackish water people must make their way every day, firstly to go to the *sari-sari* stores and the markets for the daily necessities of food, cooking fuel and cigarettes, and then to get to work. Women in the uniforms of shop assistants or clerks, wearing wellington boots, with their work shoes in one hand, slowly negotiate each slippery step, fearful of falling in.

After the workers have left for the day, the children must be washed and put into their school uniforms. The elementary school has so many students that it cannot accommodate all of them at the same time: instead, half of the classes are held in the mornings, and the other half in the afternoons. For the children who are rostered for the mornings, they must prepare for school while their siblings, cousins and friends help with chores or play games. The schoolgoers congregate at the gates of the elementary and secondary schools, clean and fresh in their uniforms and ID badges (without a badge, they will not be admitted by the school security guards). Parents and older brothers or sisters may accompany the youngest children to the gates.

After the children and the employed have left, Asogue Street quietens down a little. The heat is beginning to rise, and it is now about 9am. Children who have no further tasks or do not have to attend school until the afternoon usually congregate at one or two houses in each compound to watch television, the morning cartoons and educational programmes produced in Tagalog and English. Men and women go inside to hand wash the laundry, a daily task. This usually devolves upon the half of a couple who has no job, or the mother of one of the spouses, if the woman lives with her children's family. Some prefer to do the laundry in the bathroom, while others — especially men or those without running water in their house — will sit

outside, under the eaves of the house, and chat with friends or neighbours. Some men buy a bottle of gin to drink while they are washing the laundry, and friends who pass by are expected to sit and take a shot, for the sake of sociability.

In the *sari-sari* stores, the shopkeepers have time to relax, perhaps grab a bite or chat with friends and customers (most stores have benches nearby in a shady spot for just this purpose). Some children may come to buy junk food, *tsitsirya*. This is also a good time to visit neighbourhood healers; like everyone else they conform to the general rhythm of the working day, and it is now that, having completed their morning chores, they are likely to be free to receive patients. So a few people will go off to seek treatment at this time, especially if they are only suffering from sprains or minor fevers.

This is also a good time to buy fresh food from the morning stalls around the corner, the chicken or fish or pork or shellfish that will, in a few hours, become lunch for the household. Since many of the employed work across town and are unable to get back for lunch, this meal, like breakfast, is only partly a family affair.

As the morning progresses, the heat rises from the early-morning cool into the low thirties. Stone and concrete take on a baked, harsh look. Nothing moves in the street, except cats searching for food or a shady place to take a nap. The people have all headed indoors to escape the sun.

There is a strange sense of desolation to the street: the rusting sheet metal, the piles of greasy tools left over from someone's mechanical labours on a passenger jeepney or car, the stagnant water around and under the houses. Above, the sky is a pale blue, interrupted by a plume of white, the clouds rising off Manila Bay to the south-east. Occasionally the white slipstream of a jet can be seen overhead. There are no breezes to break the monotony of the still, moisture-laden heat, and white plastic strips — the final remains of kites which were on the losing end of kite duels — hang limply from power lines and the occasional leafless tree.

At about 1pm, when the heat of the day is at its greatest, the schoolchildren return from school for the midday meal. Elementary school children in green and white uniforms, high school girls in pink and white, crowd the street. Outside the gates of the elementary school, roadside vendors have set up their stalls, usually the same people every day, and usually in the same places, hoping to sell their candy or fried snacks to the children for a peso or two. The children usually have a few pesos for pocket money, a traditional privilege which many consider to be a right, won by throwing tantrums long and hard, morning after morning. For others, for the children from the very poorest of families, there may be a peso for a snack, or there might not. They accept their lot with greater equanimity.

On sale are a variety of snacks: sweet drinks with gelatine balls, sold in small plastic tubes with a straw (the gelatine balls are rarely eaten, more likely shot from the straw like a blowgun dart); quails' eggs fried in batter; blood or fatty pork cubes fried and strung on a skewer; deep-fried *lumpia*, or spring rolls; green mango slices, sour and refreshing.

After lunch, many families cluster around the television to watch the afternoon game show, "Eat Bulaga", which is also the name of a children's game, similar to "peek-a-boo". It is such a popular programme that few people willingly miss it. It is at about this time that the secondary school students return to their classrooms, and the afternoon shift takes over at the elementary school.

The heat continues into the afternoon and, after "Eat Bulaga", a few people will continue to watch the afternoon soap operas. However, it is much more likely that people will unroll the sleeping mats, switch on the electric fan if they have one and there is no power shortage, and take a mid-afternoon nap.[8]

Now the street is at its quietest. The ambulant vendors, who have been plying their trade at intervals throughout the morning, selling religious icons, wall mirrors, mosquito nets, toothbrushes and dried fish, are nowhere to be seen. The postman has done his rounds, delivering letters, bills and — sometimes — cheques. There are few customers at the *sari-sari* stores.

Anyone on the street at this time is most likely to be an outsider, someone not known to the majority of residents, someone to be watched carefully. They may be lost, or they may be visiting someone in the street or nearby, or just passing through — or they may be up to no good.

Gradually, from about 3pm, the street returns to life. As the sun declines towards the west, as the day becomes a little cooler, people begin to emerge from their houses, still a little muzzy-headed and bleary-eyed from their afternoon naps. Chickens emerge from under houses to scratch and peck at the ground, perhaps followed by a small horde of peeping, curious chicks. Older women cluster at one or another *sari-sari* store to gossip or watch the world go by. Men do the same at other stores. There is no clear or necessary gender division in this clustering: men and women do mix, but there is a definite tendency for the older women to be left alone. Others read comic books at the stores or under the eaves of houses, women chat or collect the laundry which was hung out that morning and is now dry. *Jueteng* collectors make their second run of the day, to announce the winning numbers from the morning or to collect for the afternoon draws. Technically illegal but in practice often run under the protection of the police, *jueteng* is a popular game, conducted more-or-less openly, but with a vaguely clandestine air to it, as though it is something more mischievous than illegal.

The vendors reappear, walking down the street, displaying their wares or calling them out. The street side stalls are a buzz of activity as the sellers prepare food for the afternoon sale. While one person is left to mind the store, the other spouse or a close relative collects a child or two and heads off to Sangandaan market to purchase stock. Both the buyers and the sellers at the market are constantly trying to establish beneficial *suki* relationships: that is, the buyers become regular and valued clients who, in return for repeated patronage of a particular supplier, receive discounts or other benefits for buying in bulk from that particular market stall.

As the day cools, the young men who form *Tropog* [short for *Tropang Pogi*, literally: "Handsome Gang"], the Asogue Street gang, collect on the street to practice basketball or play a friendly game with a neighbouring

street gang. The gangs in this area rarely have trouble with one another — they are generally friendly and tend rather to help keep the peace, since most everybody prefers a quiet life. However, woe to the outsider who might want to cause trouble, as they may well find themselves facing half a dozen or more brawny young men, summoned from houses and drinking sessions up and down the street. In some households, if there is sickness, mothers or grandmothers will take the children out again to see healers, since it is now cool enough to go visiting. It is also the most usual time to go and see a doctor, if people believe that to be necessary; this is much more dependent on the schedule the doctor keeps. However, with the lack of telephones, and the tendency to see a doctor only when there is a real emergency, it is far more usual that people will go over to the consultancy about now, and take the risk that the waiting room is already full. Usually people are prepared to wait, especially since the drugstores at Sangandaan do not close until quite late in the evening.

Children are playing in the street, hopscotch and tag, enjoying the breeze which has come up from the sea to the west. Their numbers are bolstered by the students coming out of the elementary school, eating their snacks which they bought from the roadside vendors a moment ago. At certain times of the year, the children play with kites made out of plastic. Usually, they will climb onto roofs to fly them, since there is not enough open space on the ground, preferring to take their chances with the uncertain footing of the corrugated metal-and-timber rooftops. Ground glass has been glued to the first metre or so of the kite string, and, by rubbing one's kite string against another person's, it is possible to break their tether and send the opponent's kite off into the blue yonder, usually to end up tangled on a power line or in a tree. This is how the kites duel in Manila.

Now is the time to go visiting, especially for young men. Young women tend to stay more or less around the house, helping with the chores or, occasionally, going down to the stores to buy food or other necessities. A young, unmarried woman — a *dalaga* — is expected to be demure, retiring, a little shy. Although there are many exceptions in Asogue Street (especially

among the teenage girls who are still too young to marry, but old enough to be possibly attractive to young men), for most young, marriageable women, they show the street and the neighbourhood by their absence that they are discreet and quiet, working at home, potentially good wives and mothers. The aim for most young men and women is to marry, to raise a family. Without marriage and children, men and women here are never considered truly adult; it marks the passage from childhood to adulthood, although one is technically always subservient to one's parents, regardless of whether or not one is married. Although some men may achieve adulthood without marriage, by being "characters",[9] for a woman — at least as far as society is concerned, although the women themselves may disagree — spinsterhood is a stigma, evidence that they were unable to find a man. Of women who do not marry, men and married women say that they become "*matigas/mainit ang ulo*" [hard/hot-headed], or simply *loko-loko* [crazy].

Unlike young women, the young men are expected to explore their environment, to travel around the city and perhaps around the country, to meet people and to make friends. It is a mark of a man if he has many *barkada* [peer groups/drinking companions] in different places, or if he is called a "cowboy", that is, one who can go anywhere, do anything, consume any alcoholic substance, make friends easily and get along well with people.

So the young, unmarried men, the *binata* in their early twenties, may go out to visit at this time, or others may come to them. If they do, then there will most likely be an *inuman* [drinking session] to properly entertain the guest, a session that will often last until well into the evening, and one at which the older men are unlikely to attend, except briefly, and then only for the sake of *pakikisama* [companionship]. More likely, however, the young men will not go out, but will stay for the evening meal and then perhaps congregate, sometimes sitting respectfully with the older men. If there is a televised basketball match, a birthday, a *mah jong* game or some other cause for celebration, they may congregate at someone's house to drink, and men of all ages — but almost never women, and certainly never the young, unmarried women — will join together in this. But this will most likely

occur after the evening meal. If a drinking session has begun earlier (sometimes, they may begin first thing in the morning, if enough men are so inclined or there is an unexpected visitor — the vagaries of travel in the Philippines means that extra-provincial travellers can arrive at any time), then the men may quietly sneak off, one at a time, to eat the meal with their family, and perhaps return to the drinking later, as the mood takes them.

The tempo of trade at the *sari-sari* stores has gradually increased during the afternoon, as the evening meal is planned and the necessary ingredients are purchased. If there is a need for ice, either for cooking or, more likely, to cool drinks, then the younger children will be sent to a house with a functioning refrigerator to purchase some: a plastic tube of ice for a peso. This is the main use of refrigerators, to manufacture and store frozen water for sale, rather than for keeping foodstuffs over an extended period. They are generally only full of edibles or leftovers during festive occasions, such as children's' birthdays (if it is a significant year, since not all of a child's birthdays are celebrated with the same degree of attention) or at Christmas or New Year.

By this time the evening is fast approaching. The sky rapidly deepens in colour from pale blue to indigo, and the mosquitoes return, hungry and persistent. Most of the vendors have closed up, to return home to eat.

The evening meal is generally eaten at about 7pm, after nightfall, in silence at the table, although some eat sitting in front of the television, to watch the evening news telecasts and current affairs programmes. After the news there are comedies, films or dramas, some in Tagalog and others in English, the latter produced in the United States. Most people, if they are not out drinking, gaming or entertaining guests, will tend to stay home at this time. Some people may go out to the *sari-sari* stores, to sit and watch the street, or to chat with friends and neighbours. It is a period for recuperating from the labours of the day, and to prepare for those of tomorrow — secondary school students do their homework, while most elementary students have the evening free, since their homework is usually done in the morning or afternoon when they are not at school.

Mosquito coils or electric fans are being used everywhere by now to keep the mosquitoes at bay, their pungent odour or grating whirr a counterpoint to conversation or the television's monologue.

Eventually, even the drinking sessions end. By now, children, women and the men who have not joined in the drinking will have finished any homework, or watched television, and have rolled out their bedding and strung up their mosquito nets. Most *sari-sari* stores close up between about 7pm and 9pm. Eventually, the drinkers stagger back to their homes, crawl under the mosquito nets and fall asleep. This is also the time when younger men, out courting or visiting friends, return.

Soon, it is quiet. A cat yowls in the distance, or a dog barks. Footsteps are heard: a latecomer, singing to himself in the darkness.

One Scratch, One Eat

This thesis is about the perception and understanding of distance, danger and power, as exemplified by the beliefs of a group of neighbours about sickness, healing and the spirit world. Those neighbours live in and near Asogue Street, in Barangay[10] Tugatog, the municipality of Malabon, Metro Manila. The focus of the thesis is on a single aspect of life among those neighbours, representatives of the urban poor of Manila. Sickness, healing, the spirit world and all that goes with these is merely a part — and a limited part, at that — of the ongoing, day-to-day existence of the residents of Asogue Street. Of far greater importance to the people of Asogue Street are the questions of daily survival: of raising the money to live, to buy food and clothing, to pay the bills and the rent, of finding and holding jobs.

Who are these people, among whom I lived for a total of fifteen months, from October, 1993, to January, 1994, and then again from April, 1994, to April, 1995? How do they live, what do they think about, what do they do with their time? To put this another way, what were the ethnographic "nuts and bolts" of my fieldwork?

It is impossible to answer these questions in any depth: they would rightly be the subjects of their own ethnographies. But I can attempt to give

some partial answers, if only to provide a sense of the background against which I hustled for, pestered after, or was at times the unwilling recipient of information.

Built on low-lying swampy ground in the north-west sector of the great conurbation of Metro Manila are the municipalities of Navotas, Malabon and Kalookan. They are clustered around the traffic roundabout at Monumento, a monument to Andres Bonifacio, leader of the successful anti-Spanish uprising of the late 1890s. From here, one can go north into the newer subdivisions of Catmon and Acacia, or east along the Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (EDSA) ring road, which circles the older parts of the city (Monumento is the northwest terminus of this semi-circular thoroughfare). It was on EDSA, further to the east and south, that Manileños gathered in their thousands in 1986 to topple Ferdinand Marcos. Known in Australia as the "People's Power Movement", in the Philippines it is more often referred to as the EDSA Revolution. EDSA will take you through Quezon City, the administrative centre of Metro Manila and official capital of the Philippines, and then on to the business district of Makati.

One can travel directly south from Monumento, passing through the great sprawling slums of Tondo and Quiapo, eventually reaching the heavily-polluted Pasig River. South of this is old Manila. The quickest way to reach this part of the city is by the Light Rail Transport, or LRT, which travels high above the congested streets. Monumento is the northernmost station, the end of the line.

To the west is a two-lane road which leads to Sangandaan intersection and, beyond that, to the district of Letre, and from there to the town centre of Malabon and the coast. It is possible to follow this road and then turn left, to the south. Eventually, this road will take you past the site of what, at the time of my fieldwork, was Smoky Mountain,[11] an enormous pile of rotting refuse which was home to several hundred squatters who earned a living by scavenging the freshly-dumped waste and selling it to Chinese-Filipino businessmen. Beyond that are the northern ports and inter-island

ferry terminals and, ultimately, a bridge over the Pasig to Roxas Boulevard and old Manila.

Barangay Tugatog is situated in the extreme south-eastern corner of the municipality of Malabon, on the boundary with Kalookan City. Indeed, the nearest market of any size, at Sangandaan intersection, is over the municipal line. Tugatog is considered by the Philippine authorities to be an "economically depressed area": in other words, many — or most — of the people who live there are poor, generally without steady sources of income or anywhere suitable for growing their own food. It is a slum area, and that is the way it was described to me by a *barangay tanod* [*barangay* watchman] on my second day of fieldwork. The people who live there recognise themselves as being poor, especially in relation to the wealthy Filipinos who work in Makati or foreigners (who are, by definition, wealthy), and they also recognise grades of relative poverty among themselves. Those who live in Tugatog and the surrounding areas may have greater or lesser slices of the fiscal pie compared to each other, but within Tugatog as a whole, the pie is still a small one.

Asogue Street runs roughly from the north-west to the south-east. It is perhaps two hundred metres long, and forms the southernmost and westernmost boundary of a series of parallel residential blocks which terminate to the north-east at M. H. del Pilar Street, a major thoroughfare which links Sangandaan intersection to the east with the municipality of Valenzuela and points further north. The barangay itself straddles this road, with the larger chunk — including the plaza and health clinic — on the far side. Slightly to the west is the Star Plastic factory, run by a Chinese-Filipino, known to the Asogue Street residents as Mr Lim. His plastic manufactory provides employment for a number of people.

Asogue Street terminates at an L-bend at its north-western extremity, turning back towards the residential areas. Within these residential areas are dotted numerous *sari-sari* stores, bakeries, junk shops and small businesses, as well as a handful of "factories" — sweatshops — which produce a range of goods, from confectionery to plastics. Some of these

factories operate legally, while others lack the necessary permits and it is rumoured that these are allowed to exist because their owners pay *tong* [protection money], to the local police. I was told that the *tong* paid by the factory owners would be far cheaper than the expenses required to get a factory legally registered, plus such businesses could also benefit by having the personal protection of the police officer or officers involved in the *tong* transactions.

Unregistered ventures of this sort are quite common in the Philippines, especially among jeepney owners, who are required to register their vehicle in order to operate a particular route.[12] Many do not, or register it for a less profitable route while operating it on a more attractive one. Such illegal, unregistered activities are called *kolorum* or *colorum*.

Two factories take up most of the centre of Asogue Street, on the northern side. My home compound faced one of these. Adjacent to this compound was the local elementary school, whose high, white stone walls surmounted by barbed wire and broken glass occupied the last quarter of the street. Next to the elementary school is the secondary school, which opens onto Estanio Street, forming the top of a T-junction with the southern end of Asogue Street. Beyond this, to the northeast, rise the high walls of the Malabon cemetery, which abuts directly onto the Kalookan cemetery. To the northeast of this intersection is a wide road, used as a parking lot and community basketball area. Located here is the *barangay* hall and the local police station, with its complement of khaki-shirted, sunglass-wearing, armalite rifle-wielding protectors of law and order.

From the southeastern end of Asogue Street is Bisig, a cluster of timber, hollow block and sheet metal houses jammed so closely together that there is generally only room to move about in single file. Bisig is considered by Asogue Street residents to be a tough area, a place of some danger and the home of some of the poorest people living near Asogue Street. It is bisected by a canal which, every morning, is coated in a thick, black scum in which is trapped a variety of refuse: plastic bags, cigarette butts, human waste, dead animals. The residents dredge it every morning.

Further to the south, the same canal is so sluggish and silted that grass grows from the rubbish accumulated on its surface, the only large expanse of greenery in the area (concrete or rammed earth are the usual surfaces).

This story from Danny — who regularly drinks with friends in Bisig — was told to me to highlight the perceived danger of the area:

> Some of my *barkada* [friends/peer group/drinking companions] were drinking in Bisig, celebrating that some of them had graduated from Criminology.[13] One of them had two hand grenades, one was real and the other was a dud, and, for a joke and because he was drunk, he pulled the pin on the dud. Except that he removed the pin on the wrong grenade. Parts of my friends were stuck to the walls, we had to scrape them off. I was supposed to go drinking with them that time, but I was late.[14]

According to Gerardo, Bisig is "the other side of the world". Although he was joking about how far it was from Asogue Street (the width of a single road separates Asogue from Bisig), this comment highlights how far apart the two places are conceptually, at least to some Asogue Street residents — although my neighbours could visit the place relatively easily, I was always provided with an escort, even when I became known around the neighbourhood. It was considered too dangerous for me, as a foreigner, to venture there alone. Other Asogue Street residents considered the place to be dangerous for any non-Bisig locals, not just foreigners.

"Behind" Asogue Street are the "squatters", whose ramshackle dwellings stretch in an arc from the north of Asogue Street down to the western and southern walls of the secondary school. The houses are generally makeshift and look temporary (although they are not), crammed together on low-lying ground. Several, built on swampy patches, are on stilts and are reached by walkways of rotting, reclaimed timber. Houses throughout the area are built from a variety of materials, whether scavenged or purchased, and include timber, concrete blocks, sheet metal and plastic.[15] Beyond the squatter area is a wide, fairly flat expanse of fish farms, although these are gradually being filled in to make way for new developments. It was one such redevelopment (widely believed to be illegal), which almost

completely blocked the natural drainage around Asogue Street, and contributed to the floods in 1994 (the first in living memory in that area). The compounds around Asogue Street do not provide direct access to the squatters' area. Instead, one must take the long way, either by going around the back of the schools and over a clapper bridge spanning the grass-covered canal, or by heading north and then doubling back where the squatter area meets the residential regions to the north.

Although the residents of Asogue Street use the term "squatter" to identify those who live beyond and behind, they also freely admit that, technically, they are also squatters. Despite the fact that parts of Asogue Street have been continuously occupied for up to fifty years, no one has ever purchased or rented the land they live on — except from other squatters, never from "legitimate" landowners. Although the more solid construction of the houses here (generally hollow block and concrete with sheet metal roofs) gives the impression of permanence, these people are theoretically just as vulnerable to eviction as are the squatters behind. The land here is believed to be owned by a Chinese businessman, but no one has heard from him in years, and he may be dead.[16]

The People

Asogue Street is approximately 200 metres long, and contains five compounds of varying sizes, as well as a number of free-standing houses, surrounded by high walls. The compounds are generally more like dead-end alleys: they are narrow, long lots which were originally settled by one person or family, and have gradually become filled as the original family grew, or other families members (consanguineal and affinal) have come to Manila from various provinces to seek work or to be close to kin. Thus, areas that would have initially been viable as small farms have become densely-packed residential compounds, as new arrivals or offshoots from the original family built their own dwellings. This pattern seems to have been followed in the residential areas to the north-east of Asogue Street, where family members cluster together.

It is difficult to give exact estimates of family sizes and numbers of people in my field site. This is partly due to the fact that there was a degree of mobility within the street, with people — especially younger men — arriving and leaving at intervals. Additionally, my field site was not conveniently "bounded" in the way that a rural village or specific ethnic group sometimes is; the boundaries were so porous that there were many people who lived on the street that I knew only by sight, while some important informants lived outside the barangay, outside Malabon, and even in the provinces. For my informants, social interaction tended to centre on the nearby family and neighbours — that is, Asogue Street and its immediate surrounds — but could also leap across the city or to other provinces or countries. Like my informants, my own interactions and sources of information were primarily obtained in and around Asogue Street, but were neither exclusively centred there, nor all-inclusive of it. As the compound with which I was most familiar, I will describe 53 Asogue Street, the Pingol family compound, as a representative sample of my field site.

There are fifteen households within the compound. By "household", I mean a recognised, enclosed economic living arrangement that usually contains a married couple with at least one child. Newlyweds prefer to move into their own homes, rather than stay with either set of parents-in-law (there is no discernible preference for viri- or uxorilocality) as quickly as is practical, although this is not always possible. The parents in each household range in ages from the early twenties (with one or two infants) to late middle age (with up to four or five children, the oldest being of marriageable age). In addition to the parents and children, each household may accrue a number of relatives or friends who have moved in for various reasons. Thus, in my own house, in addition to the two parents and four children, there was the wife's widowed mother, a maid,[17] and an anthropologist.

The compound itself contained four (later three) houses occupied by the direct descendants of Bernardo Pingol (the original settler): two were his adult sons and their families, and a third was occupied by his daughter, her husband, children and Bernardo's widow. Another six houses were occupied

by people who could claim kinship up to the fourth degree with Bernardo or Bernardo's immediate ancestors. These people were referred to simply as cousins, and were considered "family", even though they did not bear the Pingol name. Several of these households also contained extended family sets, involving a married couple and their children, parents, siblings, nieces or nephews.

The remaining houses were occupied by "family friends". At least one person in each such household had been intimately known, prior to their settling in the compound, to one of the Pingol family members. These ties were further strengthened by living in the compound, and close neighbours tended, over time, to become godparents to each others' children. Thus, Con Ching was asked to live in the compound while she was living in the cemetery, and her daughter and son-in-law built their own house a few years later, also within the compound. Similarly, two houses were occupied by the families of men who had run with Bernardo's eldest son in their younger, wilder days.

People arrive from the provinces to live or to look for work, others leave.[18] People come to stay with relatives, or newlyweds move in together. There are no discernible patterns which would suggest that an individual or a newlywed couple will move in with, or nearby to, particular relatives. Rather, people go where there is space, where they can be accommodated. Often this is close to, or in the same household as, one set of parents-in-law. The absence or availability of the physical space needed to construct a house is far more relevant than abstract rules of patri- or matrilocality. And the rules of hospitality strongly emphasise making space to fit one more sleeping body, feeding one more hungry belly, especially when they are kin, old friends or neighbours.

This pattern of a compound populated with households formed by adult siblings and their spouses, with cousins and old friends, is repeated around Asogue Street and other residential areas. Very well-off extended families do not live in such compounds, but tend rather to have free-standing, walled-off houses.

Discounting children, there are three basic age strata. The eldest, those aged from about 50 up, were often the first of their family to settle in the area, and none were born in Asogue Street. They began families there, and have watched their children grow to maturity and, in time, marry and produce their own children. Below them are the middle aged adults, ranging from their mid-thirties to late forties. These people may or may not have been born in Tugatog. Some were, while others have settled here with native spouses or have come because they had kin living in the area. Their children range from pre-teens to some who are just reaching marriageable age, and may or may not have begun courting. The youngest group range from their early twenties to early thirties. They have just begun families, or have yet to marry. Many of these were born in Tugatog, although they tend to maintain strong links with extended kin in the "home" provinces of their parents. Few couples hail from the same province; whenever I asked about how couples met, the circumstances varied, but the fact that they had all met in Metro Manila, after moving to the city for one reason or another, was a constant.[19]

The residents of Asogue Street are not comprised of one ethnically-homogeneous group. People, or their parents, originated from all over the Philippines, and it is quite common for someone to have come from a completely different part of the Philippines to their spouse, or their spouse's parents. Therefore, I was acquainted with people who claimed anywhere from Zambales and Pangasinan in the north, to the island of Mindanao in the south, as their "home province" — a place where either they or their parents had been born, and where they knew they still had kin, whom they might have visited on occasion. In this way, one individual could lay claim to having several home provinces because of the vagaries of migration and marriage. In general, most people seemed to consider the province or ethnolinguistic group of their agnates — their fathers and fathers' fathers — as being the "main" home province/group, while the others were subsidiary bases, which could be emphasised when necessary in order to show group affiliation.

Given the great diversity of linguistic groups represented in Asogue Street (even within individual households), people generally conversed in either English, Tagalog or Taglish. Taglish is a meld of English and Tagalog which uses the grammar and syntax of the latter language, but employs words from the former tongue when these are more convenient.[20] Both English and Tagalog (euphemistically referred to as "Filipino") are taught in the school system, whereas most people have differing first tongues, depending on the province of origin. In Asogue Street, Visayan words are occasionally used in day-to-day conversation, but this is uncommon. Certainly, I did not normally hear other tongues used outside the home.

Although there was no one "home province" which formed a dominant ethnic or linguistic group in Asogue Street, the largest minority was formed by people who claimed the Visayan island chain as their home area, and so spoke one or more of the Visayan languages with some degree of fluency. Of this minority, the largest group hailed from the provinces of Panay Island, which was the home of the area's first settler. Apart from the Visayas,[21] no other area was represented by any large number of people, with perhaps one, two or three persons claiming any particular region as their home province. I did not encounter any instances of tension between the Visayans and the representatives of any other ethnolinguistic groups; rather, emphasis was placed on togetherness, friendship and the similarities between neighbours, kin and the urban poor generally.

No matter what people did for a living or where they came from, it was the similarity between people in the situation of being poor which was always emphasised to me. Although differences were pointed out (particularly differences of origin which would have been well-known to everyone who lived there) these were for my benefit, either in response to my questions about people's origins, or to point out likely informants on particular topics: so-and-so is from Samar-Leyte, where there are many sorcerers; this other person is related to a healer in Pangasinan; and so on. Origins mattered less in daily life than did maintaining good relations with kin and neighbours.

On one occasion, at a drinking party, the men decided that, since everyone there (apart from myself) claimed to be Visayan, either by virtue of birth or descent from a native-born Visayan, this was to be a Visayans-only drinking party. Since the rules of hospitality decree that no one who wishes to drink can be excluded, this rule could only ever be enforced as a joke. I was asked where I came from and responded with, "Australia, a large and distant part of the Visayas." Other men who joined the drinking session were told that they couldn't join in unless they were Visayan, and were then asked if they were from that area. Of course, those of us not from that part of the world were made honorary Visayans for the purposes of the rule. This was the only occasion in which the matter of ethnolinguistic background was raised as implying membership of some sort of group, and it was only for the purposes of joking — no one was ever really going to be excluded from the drinking session, nor did anyone take it as an affront that, for the evening, they had to shed their background and become temporary Visayans. Even during the drinking session, Visayan was rarely spoken.

Earning a Living

Although Malabon is intimately connected with fish-farming and sea fishing, not a single one of my informants made a living through primary industry. Indeed, the great problem for me was to ascertain exactly *how* people managed to survive, given the great poverty in Asogue Street and the lack of government assistance in terms of unemployment benefits (see also Decaesstecker 1975:3-4).

The initial answer to my questions on this was always, "*descarte*, we use *descarte*." Originally a Spanish word, *descarte* is loosely defined as "using one's skills, talents, luck, connections or whatever else in order to find an income." In other words, there is no one main source of income for the majority of people; rather, they must rely on obtaining temporary and casual work, on a variety of small-business transactions, on having an eye for the main chance. They hear of possibilities for making money through the auspices of friends, family, patrons and sheer luck. They do whatever they can to bring money into the house, to feed and clothe their family.

At the top end of the scale were those people who had "good jobs" [E]: relatively secure and reasonably well-paid positions. These included teachers, receptionists, security guards, a foreman at a flour mill, a foreman at a plastics factory (several people were employed in various capacities at Mr Lim's Star Plastic factory), and shop assistants. It was generally difficult to find such work, and people needed to have the correct qualifications. Tertiary education was a prerequisite, and for those without credentials, such employment was virtually impossible to obtain. Not all tertiary qualifications were of much value in attempting to find work: although an engineering degree was a prerequisite to finding work in that field, Asogue Street residents with such qualifications had obtained them at the less expensive and less exclusive institutions, and as such, their degrees were not worth as much in the employment market as those who had graduated from the "better" universities.

Others did piecework, whether this was cleaning weapons for a nearby rifle range or working at a textiles factory. Such work was highly insecure and irregular, and the income from such ventures could not be relied upon for any length of time. This sort of work, and the more secure forms of employment, were taken up by both men and women equally, although the particular kinds of job tended to exhibit gender-bias: men were more likely to find employment as security guards, while women were more often receptionists or teachers.

Two men in Asogue Street earned a living by driving jeepneys. In general, jeepney drivers, like bus drivers, do not own the vehicle. Rather, they rent it from the owner for a set daily rate: one figure quoted to me was P350[22] a day; however, this was for a fairly lucrative route. Anything they make above that rate is theirs, and the owner pays all route registration fees and mechanical repair bills. For instance, it costs P6000 to register a jeepney for a particular route, and this registration is valid for five years. It is considered much easier to own than to drive, since the greater profit goes to the owner, who has to do very little, and certainly runs no personal risk. Muggings and shootings have been known to occur on jeeps, and

sometimes the driver is the target. Although this is the worst that can happen, it is also well known that jeepney drivers suffer from haemorrhoids, an occupational hazard.

Below jeepney driving in terms of both income and status are the non-motorised tricycle riders (although motorcycle-sidecars are found in Manila, no one who owned or operated one lived near Asogue Street). Essentially, their conditions are similar, although they are more likely to be owner-operators, given the smaller amounts of capital required to start such a business.

For those without qualifications, or with degrees for which there was an oversupply of qualified graduates, work was hard to come by and exceedingly insecure when it was found. At the time, there was a glut of qualified engineers, although I know of one who was able to get work in Quezon Province as a supervisor at a building site. Mostly, jobs were found through friends or relatives, since the work was generally unskilled or semi-skilled, and virtually any unemployed man off the street could do it. One man worked as a lorry driver for a pharmaceutical company, but he spent as much time laid off and waiting to be called on as he did actually working (in all such cases, the employee would only be paid for time spent on the job — if temporarily laid off due to lack of demand, they were again without income until such time as the employer needed them). Unskilled workers were also sometimes fired after three to twelve months and replaced. I was told this technique was used by employers to ensure a constant turnover of staff, the theory being that this would retard the growth of unionism in the workplace.

For many men, it was impossible to obtain regular and reasonably-paid work. Such men tended to stay at home most of the day, doing housework and drinking, while the women would take on a variety of jobs, often at some distance from the house. These househusbands, who may have felt that their authority as head of the house was weakened by their inability to provide for their family, often drank regularly, constantly and heavily. Jigs (a four-year-old girl) explained that her parents were "'*sing*-'*log*-'*sok*", that is, *lasing* [drunk], *tulog* [asleep] and *pasok* [to enter, in this case a

workplace]. Here she referred to her father as being drunk and asleep, while her mother had already gone to work. People said that this pretty well summed up life for many in Asogue Street.[23]

Self-employment was another strategy used to gain a livable income. In order to set up one's own business, it was first necessary to obtain the capital, and this initial stumbling-block was all but insurmountable for most people. I was told that if there were some way to obtain the capital needed to start a small business very few people in Asogue Street would be unemployed for long, since almost everyone had an idea for a business. Without a sudden windfall or wealthy relatives, the capital needed for any new venture is virtually impossible to obtain — there are no government schemes to promote the inception and growth of livelihood-generating businesses, nor are the banks willing to lend money to people who have no collateral.

Nevertheless, there were a number of people who ran *sari-sari* stores or, less ambitiously, maintained static or ambulant food stalls. In one case, a woman gave manicures and pedicures for about P20 each, going from house to house on a daily basis. In most cases, these were ongoing businesses; however, a few started up during my fieldwork.

All of the ventures or employment avenues so far mentioned have been legal, in the sense that they are either officially regulated, or the question of legality is immaterial (to the best of my knowledge, there was never any need to legally register a roadside stall or *sari-sari* store). It is also possible to earn a living through means that are either totally outside the law (such as dealing in illegal drugs) or by recourse to what I will call "semi-legal" techniques. Semi-legal ventures were technically illegal, but did not necessarily meet with community approbation (that is, were "legitimate" [Hart 1973:74]), or were ignored by the police (in some cases, the police were believed to be either masterminding the venture, or protecting it in return for a consideration). Such cases might include *tong* collection at busy intersections (small payments to ensure passage unhampered by the local traffic police — these were conducted quite openly at Sangandaan

intersection), or *jueteng*. Prostitution might be another source of income; however, although prostitution was conducted near Sangandaan market, I did not meet anyone in Asogue Street who made, or admitted to making, a living in this way.

Jueteng is an illegal form of gambling which was indulged in quite openly wherever I went in the Philippines. Basically, a collector will call on the houses and compounds in a particular catchment area. People who wish to bet choose and write down or call out for the collector any two numbers between one and 37. The two successful numbers are called later that day, when the collector will visit those people who placed bets earlier. The pay out is 400 per cent of the original bet (P1 is the minimum bet). Collectors are paid 20 per cent of the subscriptions they collect, while "middle men" who co-ordinate the collectors receive 5 per cent of the take from all of his or her collectors, so it is in the interest of both collectors and managers to get as many bets as they can. Although illegal, the ongoing presence of *jueteng*, like *tong*, is never seriously challenged, although both are the regular targets of outraged newspaper editorials (in part because the police are widely reputed to be involved in their operation).

No matter what variety of techniques are used to bring money into a household, families are generally able to obtain enough to purchase food, coffee, cigarettes or alcohol. If worse comes to worst, one can always turn to family or friends for help and, if these fail, there are pawnbrokers (most people have one or two pieces of highly valued gold or silver jewellery that they can pawn) and money-lenders as the ultimate recourse. Bills are paid as best one can — electricity, water, rent — if they can not be paid, then people live without the utility. Sometimes, water or electricity is connected to a house illegally, either by tapping the mains, or by connecting to another person's supply and paying rent to them. Education, clothing and other expenses are met as best one can — sometimes by simply going without (several people told me of times when their diet consisted for weeks of only rice, tomato ketchup, black coffee and whatever food their neighbours could

spare). Officialdom has to be paid on time and in cash, but family and friends can be paid back when feasible, and payment can often be made in kind.

Apart from the legal and illegal varieties of steady employment, casual employment and small-scale business ventures, there is one major source of income yet to be examined: overseas contract workers (OCWs). A major component of the Philippine economy is made up of the earnings of the OCWs, who are recognised by the Philippine Government as being sources of much-needed foreign exchange and employment (Banzon-Bautista 1989:150; see also Ozeki 1995).[24]

It is a major industry, and operates at two levels; that of the highly-skilled professionals who attempt to seek work in First World countries, particularly the United States, and the unskilled or semi-skilled who provide the cheap labour needed elsewhere. The first category can be ignored for this thesis, since it comprises doctors and other professionals (and there were non in Asogue Street), who generally attempt to use their qualifications to gain entry, either permanent or long-term temporary, into other countries. As such, they constitute a "brain drain" in the Philippines — most of those who can, will leave the country permanently and settle elsewhere.

It is the second category which most interests us here. It includes merchant seamen (rarely officers — Filipinos usually provide the "muscle" on cargo ships), mechanics and menial workers in places such as Saudi Arabia or Brunei, maids in Singapore, and entertainers (possibly including prostitution) in Japan and Brunei. Less commonly, nurses and others may find work in Canada and Australia. In order to become an OCW, aspiring Filipinos must generally have the prerequisite qualifications, and find placement through a variety of referring agencies. The costs involved are prohibitive, requiring a loan from relatives or friends; however, once one member of a family is placed, it is significantly easier to place others, since the relatively greater income enjoyed by OCWs puts the costs of placement within reach.

Being an OCW is an unenviable position. They are usually mistreated, and often very homesick. The work is uniformly hard and degrading, and OCWs must spend extremely long periods away from home. However, the income generated by such individuals is relatively enormous, and is sent home in large chunks. Although the money families gain from relatives in this way is usually received too irregularly to be counted on for daily survival, it can be used to pay off outstanding debts, for education or the furtherance of the careers of kin, or for luxuries. It is through OCW remittances that people may acquire television sets, stereos, karaoke machines, refrigerators, or the capital to begin various businesses. And yet, the same people who own these luxuries are otherwise barely breaking even: the money is rarely saved, but more generally spent on sumptuary goods or debts. It is a boom-bust cycle, the money being used in the same way that any other windfall is generally employed: to clear immediate problems, buy luxuries and treat friends and neighbours to a party. In this way, Filipinos refer to themselves as "one-day millionaires": "Whenever we get a little money, we spend it straight away, share the fortune with our friends. The Filipino is a one-day millionaire, and one year poor." [E]

Most OCWs are trapped in that they need the money — or their families have become reliant on the things that their money can buy — while at the same time longing to be able to stay in the Philippines in their home with their family, to not have to return to Saudi Arabia or Singapore.

Another way to bring money and other benefits into a family is through the practice of marrying family members — almost uniformly women — to foreigners. This is related to OCW ventures in that the married-off member of the family goes to live permanently in the spouse's country, usually the United States, Canada, Australia or Germany (more rarely to other countries). Apart from the prestige that such marriages bring to the family, and the infrequent financial benefits that might be received through the mail, this practice also gains other possible benefits, such as the relocation of other family members to the target nation. It is not uncommon for the married couple to help put other family members through school, or to

send money when there is an emergency — they are a resource that can be called upon *in extremis*.

With limited security of employment, and great difficulties finding work, most Asogue Street residents — and many other Filipinos of my acquaintance — subscribed to an approach to life which could be summed up by the Tagalog term "*bahala na*". This can be glossed as, "come what may", "God will provide" or "leave tomorrow's problems to tomorrow". It is not so much a form of fatalism as an acceptance of today's problems and successes, combined with a recognition that it is all but impossible to truly plan for the future, since the future is so uncertain and fraught. If a man has a windfall, he is likely to spend the money on gifts or a party, and put it down to *bahala na*: tomorrow he will be poor again, but perhaps by then something will have turned up. If not, well, that is life. *Bahala na* is not a passive, fatalistic acceptance of the problems of life: rather, it implies an awareness that many of those problems have causes which are outside the control of Asogue Street residents.

It is also important to remember that, no matter how grim or fraught life may be for the residents of Asogue Street, there is always time to laugh, to greet friends and to simply recognise and revel in the funny side of life. Parents love to play with their children, friends enjoy jokes and gentle, mutual teasing. No matter how hard life may be or become, people will almost always hail their friends and kin, and be genuinely pleased to see them.

Most informants had some relative or other, up to the third degree, who had either married a foreigner, or had become an OCW. Although only immediate family members could expect to receive financial assistance on anything like a regular basis, more distant kin were aware that they might occasionally be able to call upon such people in case of dire emergency. There was no guarantee that any help would be forthcoming; it was understood that kin would endeavour to help where possible, but it was not always possible. Those families who had no OCW were among the poorest in Asogue Street, the ones most reliant on the good offices of their

neighbours and more distant kin in times of need — these were the ones who owned no luxuries whatsoever and, if they had no regular, steady source of employment, they were at the bottom of the relative scale of wealth. These were the people who, in and around Asogue Street, had the smallest slices of the pie.

To be "one scratch, one eat" — *isang kahig, isang tuka* — is to be at the very bottom of the ladder.[25] Street beggars and the terminally unemployed, those who don't even know where the money for the next meal is coming from (as opposed to the majority, who cannot be certain how next week's, or next month's, meals will be paid for). As they say, it is to be like a chicken, scratching in the dirt for every bite, with no guarantee that the scratching will reveal anything to eat.

Historical Background

In part, the present-day life of the residents of Asogue Street is a function of history, of that which has gone before and helped shape the conditions of the present in Metro Manila and, with it, Asogue Street. What follows highlights certain events which have helped shape the conceptual and physical geographies of the people of Asogue Street, especially the destruction of Manila during World War II and its post-war reconstruction and growth.

This section will not discuss the long history of the Philippine archipelago prior to World War II, except to touch briefly upon the Spanish occupation of the islands, since Hispanic-introduced Catholicism plays such a significant role in shaping the beliefs and attitudes of the residents of Asogue Street.

At the time of the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, the islands had been settled by Austronesian-speaking peoples. These people cultivated rice and domestic pigs and dogs, while augmenting their subsistence agriculture with fishing and hunting. They generally lived in small villages consisting of extended affinal and consanguineal kin groups called *balangays* which consisted of between thirty and one hundred households (Constantino 1975:27-28; Agoncillo & Guerrero 1987:39-40).

As part of the Spanish annexation of the archipelago, named *Felipinas* in honour of Crown Prince Philip (later Philip II), the inhabitants were gradually converted to Christianity, specifically Spanish Catholicism.[26] Conversion of the indigenes to the new religion was facilitated by a common indigenous belief in a supreme deity or "over-god", *Bathala*, whom the Spanish friars identified with the Christian God. The introduction of Catholicism to the Philippines is significant, not only for the obvious reason that the majority of Filipinos profess Catholicism — and in Asogue Street, almost everyone had been baptised a Catholic in infancy, even if a handful subsequently converted to various forms of Protestantism — but also

because of the approach Catholicism has historically taken towards indigenous belief systems.

Unlike many other Christian denominations, Catholicism often tolerates, or even encourages, indigenous beliefs or festivals, where these are not incompatible with the basic tenets of Catholic teaching. If they are incompatible, then they might be modified so that they can be more-or-less comfortably accommodated within a Catholic theological framework.[27] In time, the overlay of imported beliefs and indigenous traditions become fused into a whole which is difficult to unravel. This has certainly been the case in the Philippines: in Asogue Street, beliefs pertaining to the spirit world combine elements of Spanish Catholicism with older, apparently Austronesian traditions. For example, Easter is the best time of the year for collecting the materials needed for the strongest counter-sorcery amulets [*anting-anting*]. Since the Philippines has been a Catholic country for more than four hundred years, I consider such "foreign" elements as the crucifix to be as "authentically" indigenous as belief in, say, earth spirits. Any attempt to extricate one from the other would have been very difficult and, for the purposes of this thesis, completely unnecessary. One could argue that, rather than tolerating and modifying indigenous beliefs, Christianity was actually Filipinised by the new converts. Either way, the resulting fusion retains aspects of two quite different belief systems. By comparison, I met one old man who told me that he had recently become a Born-Again Christian, and so refused to discuss the supernatural with me because his church taught that such entities did not exist. For most residents of Asogue Street, belief in the spirits in no way contradicted their Christian beliefs.

Prior to World War II, Manila served mainly as a port for the Spanish galleon trade, and as an administrative capital for both the Spanish and, from the end of the Nineteenth Century, the United States.

Following the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, the Japanese under Lieutenant-General Masaharu Homma landed at Lingayen Gulf, Pangasinan, Luzon on December 22. Realising that his forces were inadequate to defend Manila, the

Commander-in-Chief of Filipino and American forces on the islands, General Douglas MacArthur, declared Manila an open city and retreated to the Bataan Peninsular, from there to the island fortress of Corregidor and eventually to Australia.

There followed four years of occupation, where the Japanese "...strut[ted] among us [and] berated us for having become 'Westernised' and bade us 'come home to Asia'" (Joaquin 1988:18). The occupiers herded expatriate Americans and Europeans into concentration camps, instituted "comfort houses" (brothels, in many of which the prostitutes had been coerced into their role), executed suspected guerillas and generally acted like an occupying army (Connaughton *et al* 1995:37-77).

Manila was eventually recaptured in early 1945 by the returning American troops under MacArthur. However, during the fierce fighting that raged for possession of the city most of Manila was destroyed. The Japanese tenaciously defended every major building, while the Americans responded with uncontrolled shelling which reduced most of the city's beautiful old architecture to unreclaimable rubble.[28]

Following World War II, huge numbers of Filipinos began to arrive in Manila, seeking employment or escape from the countryside, which continued to be ravaged by battles between the *Hukbalahaps* (originally the anti-Japanese guerillas) and the government-sponsored Philippine Constabulary, along with returning landlords. This movement has continued to this day, reflecting the world-wide rural-urban migration, which is most pronounced in developing countries. The city swelled at the same time that reconstruction of the devastated areas was under way (Decaesstecker 1975:2-3; Stone 1973:69-70). Highly profitable land speculation and a lack of planning guidelines or the will to enforce them resulted in a massive sprawl which grew over the decades following World War II (Pinches 1994:17-19). A largely unplanned conurbation, Metro Manila grew in all directions, until it had enveloped the old rural areas of Kalookan and Malabon. From 1946 to 1969, the city grew from a 6km to a 10km radius (Laquian 1969:6), nearly tripling its area.

> The destruction of Manila and its suburbs during World War II and the continued influx of migrants after the war changed the pattern of settlement in the metropolitan area. In the 1950s, Ermita, Malate, Paco, Santa Ana, Sampaloc and Tondo became more densely populated residential areas. (Caoili 1988:71)

To the north-east of this area, a new municipality, Quezon City (named after Manuel L. Quezon (1888-1944, President of the Philippines from 1935 until his death), was founded to be a planned city, in contradistinction to the sprawl to the south. During the postwar period, population tended to move from the inner city areas to the outer municipalities (especially Quezon City, which enjoyed a 258 per cent population growth from 1948 to 1960), following the transfer of government offices, manufacturing jobs and lower land prices (Caoili 1988:72).

> The availability of undeveloped land and lower land values in these places attracted manufacturing and other establishments from Manila. This gave rise to new residential sub-divisions and squatter settlements as the influx of migrants from rural areas, in endless search of jobs, continued...
>
> Among [the] residential areas are found the hovels of the low-income migrants who make up the squatters and slum dwellers. Most of them, however, are concentrated in the Tondo district, in the foreshore area up to Navotas [which adjoins Malabon], in the Sampaloc district, along the railroad tracks and *esteros* [drainage canals], the older sections of the city of Manila, and other places [such as parks and unused private land]. (Caoili 1988:72-73)

As the city grew outwards from the hub of old Manila, previously rural or semi-rural hinterland was gradually absorbed into the newly-urban environment. It was just after World War II that Bernardo (Badong) Pingol settled in Asogue Street, beside a mango plantation. The local elementary school was later built on the site of the plantation — Badong worked there for some years as a caretaker — but Badong's old house, built of odds and ends of timber on a number of stout piles, still stands and is now the home of his eldest son, Gerardo, and Gerardo's family.[29]

What is now the Pingol family compound was initially used by Badong and his wife, Natividad (Nati), to grow *kangkong*, [30] a semi-aquatic food plant, and raise swine. They raised a family and, when their children married in about the 1970s and 1980s, three additional houses were added to the compound. Of the three houses, one was built of hollow blocks using the remittances sent from one daughter working abroad — Badong and Nati moved into this house — while Toto's, also of hollow blocks and at the other end of the compound, was built from his and his wife's wages (he is a foreman at a flour mill, she an elementary school teacher). Gerardo and his wife moved into Badong's old house. Noemie and her husband built a house of timber over a disused well. When Badong died, they moved in with Nati, so that she would not be lonely, and a colleague of Toto's wife moved into their old house.

Relatives were invited to build houses within the compound. Thus, Lando, a cousin of the Pingols, came from the province of Bicol and built a house adjacent to Noemie's old home. Additionally, friends of Nati or her children were asked to come and live in the compound as others arrived in the city from the provinces, or were living in other parts of the city. Both Eddie Mudfish and Blind Nonoy built houses from timber in the Pingol compound through the invitation of Gerardo, Nati's eldest son. These men had been a part of Gerardo's *barkada* [peer group] during his younger, wilder days.

The establishment of households within the Pingol family compound was a gradual growth of houses up and down the whole area. Construction did not spread out from the original house which Badong built on arrival in Asogue Street, but occurred at various points, with later houses being sited between pre-existing ones. People did not build close to kin or those who had invited them to live in the compound, but wherever there was enough space for a house. This pattern of growth, with houses occurring at odd points within compounds, built by invited kin or friends, also have occurred in the other compounds along Asogue Street.

I did not find evidence to suggest that the original inhabitants considered themselves in any way the landlords or custodians of the compound. It was well-known in Asogue Street that this particular compound "belonged" to the Pingol family, yet everybody who lived in the compound were either kin to the Pingols, or tied to them by fictive kinship.[31]

According to Stone (1973), physical occupancy of space entitles a Filipino to rights over that space: they may use it as though they owned it, even though they do not necessarily own it. Stone uses the example of a vehicle which has broken down on the main road. To the driver, the section of the road which is occupied by his vehicle belongs to him for as long as he occupies it, and it is not uncommon to see vehicles being repaired in the middle of a highway, since that vehicle-sized section belongs to the occupier. In the same way, occupancy of a piece of land which was not obviously in use before the occupier moved in provides that occupier, or squatter, with exclusive rights of usage. It does not matter that the land is the legal possession of an absent owner. Someone who occupies vacant land — in the case of the Pingol compound, this occurs at the invitation of one of the Pingol family — becomes the effective owner of that land for as long as they continue to live there. The owner of the land had not been heard of in so long that residents felt secure in their freedom to continue to occupy the compound.

There was no organisation or residents' committee within the compound. Peace and order was maintained through good neighbourliness, respect for the rights of others to live in their own houses which they already occupied. There was little secrecy: people lived so close together that everyone knew the business of everyone else. Gossip was a major source of information about the doings of others, and collecting gossip required only that one sit at a *sari-sari* store and listen attentively to customers when they came to buy food or cigarettes: they would usually broadcast the latest news to the shopkeeper and to anyone else sitting at the store.

At the time of fieldwork, there was little additional room in the compound, not enough for new houses, so the question of new residents

coming in to the compound did not arise. Several houses were extended slightly, the money coming from a variety of sources but particularly from the remittances of family workers employed overseas.

The history of Manila is a long one, longer than the period of foreign colonial domination of the Philippines. Once a Muslim hill fort surrounded by swamps near a river, for more than 300 years it was the seat of Spanish rule in the archipelago, and the last place from which the Castillians were expelled in the late 19th Century. From the turn of the century until World War II it was the seat of a U.S.-dominated semi-colonial legislature. In 1945 it was devastated during the American recapture and, in the 50 years since, it has grown rapidly from those ruins: an enormous conurbation of close to 10,000,000 people, its supremacy as primate city of the Philippines unchallenged by any other urban population centre in the country. Areas that fifty or one hundred years ago were rural hinterland are now well within the urban sprawl. And Malabon is just such an old rural area, now irreversibly urban.

Early Days in Asogue Street

A global, top-down perspective of the historical background of Manila does not truly capture the sense of life in the early days of Asogue Street. This section is based around some of the reminiscences of Natividad (Nati) Pingol, the wife of the oldest living person in the street, Bernardo (Badong) Pingol. Bernardo died during my stay in the Philippines: before his death, his advanced age rendered it difficult for most people to communicate with him. I did not try to interview him due to the difficulties involved.

Nati's memories are of the concrete and the immediate, rather than of abstract concepts and events, and they do much to help a listener capture the hardships of those early days. While interviewing her, I wanted to let Nati talk about those memories which were strongest and which interested her, rather than attempting to catalogue a dry list of who settled where and when. I was not so much after names and dates and places as the sights and sounds of early life in Asogue Street.

This interview was reconstructed from my notes and tape recordings. Some sections were recorded in Tagalog, some in English, and occasional words in Visayan, which were translated for me by onlookers. Due to the multi-lingual nature of the interview, in translating it into English, the tone of Nati's written "voice" varies at different points.

Nati's Story

At the time of the interview, Nati was 78 years old, the mother of five surviving children (three sons and two daughters). Of these, two sons and one daughter had, in their turn, married, each producing their own families (three girls and one boy, three boys and one girl, and four girls), all of whom lived in the Pingol family compound. One son had broken virtually all contact with the family and now lived in the provinces, while one daughter, Beth, had emigrated to Canada. She was unemployed during the period of my fieldwork.

When Nati and Badong settled in Asogue Street, Tugatog was mainly an area of plantations. A school was built on a mango plantation, where

Badong found work. They built a raised hut beside the school. The nearest town was Malabon (Tugatog is within the municipality of Malabon), a fishing village.

The Malabon hinterland is low-lying and quite swampy, with poor drainage. In order to survive, Nati supplemented her husband's income by, among other things, growing *kangkong*.

> Our life was very hard [in Asogue Street]. Around here there was much water, and we grew *kangkong*. I used to have six children, and the youngest had very soft flesh. I used to get *kangkong*...I was pregnant. Maybe, because I was doing that most of the time [cutting *kangkong*], every day, especially afternoons, and then I would clean that until 10 o'clock at night, because I washed the stems and then cleaned that so that I could sell them in the morning at the market. Because every day I was doing that, while I was pregnant, with water up to the neck when I was cutting *kangkong*, that child was [sickly], because of the water every day. Because of the hardships of the life. When I gave birth, that sixth child was living just for a few minutes. A boy. Because they were very, very hard times in which to make a livelihood, selling *kangkong* at the market.

The area where she grew *kangkong* is now the Pingol family compound, home to perhaps twenty households of her kin and a few unrelated neighbours.

> I am 78 now. At the time my child died, I was 40 years old. I got married at 29 years old, thirty when I had my first child. That was in 1950, my first child.

A native of Panay Island, in the Visayas, Nati's story begins in the provinces.

> When I was a child, my mother sold shrimps in the market. This was when I was still a very small child living in the Visayas, in the provinces. At this time the Japanese arrived, they were here for four years. At this time I was selling shirts and trousers in the market. This was the Japanese Time. After that, it was 1946 and we had victory.
>
> My cousin brought me to Manila, to make dresses. I was making dresses, and earning ten pesos a month, during vacation from school. Afterwards, I would study. Sometimes two hours dressmaking, two hours studying in the evenings.

Nati was to continue her learned trade as seamstress and dressmaker on and off for the rest of her life. She occasionally took in clothes to be tailored or repaired while I was doing fieldwork. Sometimes this was done as a favour for friends, and sometimes when she or her children needed a little extra cash. However, her personal financial circumstances were not usually as dire as they were when she first married, thanks to having several children she could rely on for cash in emergencies, particularly her daughter in Canada. Although Beth was only receiving unemployment benefits, the occasional cheques she was able to send to Nati were, thanks to the differential value of the Canadian dollar and Philippine peso, reasonably sizeable amounts (although hardly fortunes).

In 1948, while working as a dressmaker, she married Lolo Badong. It was to be a stormy marriage, particularly in the early years. Badong often mistreated her and, which she considered worse, he placed little value on having their children educated. Indeed, he strongly opposed it.

> After the wedding, always life was hard for me. We would argue, Badong and I, and I had children. Badong and I quarrelled, and I wrote to my mother and father in the province, I told them that I wanted to come home. My mother responded to my letter, and inside was ten pesos of pocket money, which was one month's pay for me. Plus there was a ferry ticket for me to go home to the province. I received this letter, together with the ticket and the money, to go home immediately. Badong just said, "Okay", I could go home to the province. My father had written, telling me to go home because my mother was sick and wanted to see her children. [It was because of this fabrication that Badong gave his permission.]
>
> I was there in the province for two years, working as a housemaid. My mother was the one taking care of my children. Toto [her youngest son] was studying in grade one, there in the province. Then the sister of Badong asked him to go back to the province and collect us, because Badong is always drinking, and Boy [her eldest son] is the one left here with him [in Tugatog], with his aunt. Boy was not living with Badong, but with his [Badong's] sister. This house was here, in the compound. Badong is living inside the school compound at this time, and there was already a school here by this time.
>
> It's not only Badong who came to get me, but also my aunty, who was also in Manila, because she was afraid that Badong would be boxed [i.e. beaten up] by my relatives,

because they had heard what happened, how he had treated me. My relatives might be angry, and I had four brothers.

The sons with me in the province (Toto and Tonio) would not bless their own father when they first saw him.[32] Because they knew what had happened. Toto still remembers. My brothers arrived, with Badong there, and they were very angry. Badong asked forgiveness for the way he had treated me, he asked for forgiveness and promised not to do like that any more.

Nati preferred to stay in the provinces, rather than go back to Manila with Badong.

But my mother told me, "What will happen if you don't go with him? The children will grow up without a father. No matter how bad the father is, he's the father of your children." So I came back here. When I arrived at the pier at Manila, then caught a taxi from the pier, I was met by my mother-in-law, who was very *mabait* [morally good, of good character].

Badong had no work, life was very hard because we didn't have any money, and I started to grow and sell *kangkong*. If he had a contract, he could work, but without a contract, he couldn't do any work. He was searching for a livelihood. I would buy at the market at Divisoria:[33] onions, tomatoes, fresh produce. I would buy the fresh produce at Divisoria and then sell it at Sangandaan. *Kalamansi*[34] also.

Cutting the *kangkong* was very hard work, up to my neck in water. And then, when it was cut, it had to be brushed and washed because the *kangkong* in the water is very slippery. Most of that time, our viand is small fish.

To get to the market to sell the *kangkong*, I pushed it there in a cart, with my children inside as well. There was no other way I could attend to them. Boy was still in elementary school at this time. I bought *kalamansi* in Divisoria, and my children are the ones selling it in the market.

I could only save a very small amount of money. If I earn as little as five centavos extra, I will save that so I can buy more things to sell. After a morning selling in the market, we would go home and I would cook lunch. Then I would put my children to sleep and after that I would go back to the market. When I had sold everything, then I was finished for the day. After a while, the other sellers got angry with me because people always liked to buy from me. In the mornings, I would go to the cemetery and see the images of God on my way to the market, and I used to pray that I would sell everything, all my *kangkong*, at the market.

Eventually, Nati was able to save up enough money to buy swine, which she used to make extra money for her children.

> By then the eldest child was in high school. I had pigs, four of them. They were big. Because of course here there is no need to pay for going to elementary school, but that's only the elementary school. I sold the piglets, and used the money I saved to buy a sewing machine. I thought I would be able to use it to raise money to buy things like school uniforms for my children. I have pigs before, I sold their piglets to pay the [secondary] school fees and school supplies, for the education of our children.
>
> I don't have high education. I wanted my children to have high education. I didn't know how I would send my children to school so that they finish elementary and then finish high school. I didn't hope for that, for all five, but I wanted it.

Although much of Nati's work was intended to raise the money necessary for her children's education, she also bought items for her daughters.

> I thought that, when my daughters grew up, they would be beautiful. But they had no nice clothes or things, so I sometimes bought them. I bought chairs, second hand, so now we had these things and I was very happy: because when my daughters had visitors, they would have something to sit on. I was thinking only about friends, not really about young men coming to court.
>
> I made clothes for my children, and made them big, so that when the children become bigger, I just adjusted the clothes to suit. So one school uniform for all the years each one was in school. Boy was four years in first year at high school. Badong didn't want Boy to go to school any more because, the first year, he didn't go to school, just *istamby* and *barkada* [*Istamby*: pronounced "E-stambuy": to be on "standby", to be unemployed or, as in this case, a euphemism for lazing around, not attending school or work when it is available. *Barkada*: a peer group, companions. Often, as in this case, it refers to extended drinking sessions on a repeated basis with one's *barkada*.]. So Badong didn't enrol him in first year because he has a *barkada*. Then later on, Boy asked a favour from me to enrol him without Badong's knowledge — Badong didn't want him to be enrolled.
>
> At this time, Badong was working in the school, and his wage was four pesos a day. We were always eating *lugaw* [thin rice porridge or gruel]. Instead of like you are cooking rice, you need say four cans of rice, but if you are cooking lugaw, just

one can of rice is enough for the family. We could only drink or see milk during Christmas and New Year. We had no money. Breakfast, lunch and dinner — *lugaw*. Just have one big bowl and get banana leaves and scoop that in to the bowl, all of us doing that. *Mahirap, talaga; sobrang mahirap*! [Truly difficult, too difficult!]

Later, Beth and Noemie [Nati's daughters] were working in Divisoria, even from when they were children. Toto is still studying at this time. Loli and Irma (cousins of Nati) saw an advertisement for work in a factory that made Timex watches. Loli and Beth were the first to pass the examination (Loli took three attempts to pass). They worked for four years in the Timex factory, and then it was shut down. They could have gone to Cebu because the factory was transferred there, but they didn't like to do that. Loli bought a Sony TV (a big one), but Beth applied for placement in Hong Kong.[35] After seven years there, she went on to Canada, where she now lives.

[Partly thanks to Beth,] now we have plenty of rice, not like before, when it was always *lugaw*. I didn't know how to count money before, because I had nothing to count! But now, I know how to count money...I have seen a thousand pesos from Beth, once nine thousand.

Before Nati's daughters and Toto were able to find work, they contended with great poverty. At the same time, Badong was hostile to Nati's wishes that they educate their children.

There was just one house here, our house. We had very little, Badong was the janitor at the school. The children grew up with *lugaw*. Rice for lunch, *lugaw* for breakfast and dinner. A little coffee.

Badong used to argue with the children, and so I didn't let him know that they were still going to school, which he didn't want. I didn't tell him about the money I used to pay for their education. The principal at the high school [nearby] asked her to transfer the children here, perhaps at night school, because she (the principal) knew that it was very hard for me to keep having to bring the children back and forth from their school in Tondo, which is where I was taking them to be educated [all part of hiding the fact from Badong]. Badong would be angry if he knew that the children were going to school: he didn't like the idea of them going to high school. That's why I sent them to school without Badong's knowledge. It's really difficult if you have many children.

Afterwards, Tonio graduated with all his shoes too small, and his clothes old. Nobody knew, I just took Con Ching [an old friend and neighbour] with me to the ceremony, not Badong.

> Boy graduated without the knowledge of Badong. I sold pigs to pay for the children's education.

Although there were numerous difficulties, Nati's life became easier once her children completed high school. Whereas elementary schooling is free, secondary education in the Philippines is fee-based, and the burden on parents, then as now, is great. However, without education, it is impossible for young people to obtain regular work — and even then there is no guarantee.

> I am not rich. But with God's mercy, I have got by. It was with God's mercy that I was able to get such good, big pigs. And they are what helped me get my children through school. I didn't have to buy food for the pigs, but leftovers: scraps. That was what the pigs were raised on. The pigs were kept where Eden's house is now [her immediate neighbour].
>
> Even if you are not a genius or have no high learning, you know what a person is by the way he or she acts.

***

The daily struggle for income and dignity occupy most of the individual Asogue Street resident's time and energy. Sickness is a part of this struggle, and understanding of sickness is based on a set of underlying assumptions known, to a greater or lesser extent, by everyone. The following chapter introduces this background information, as well as discussing some of the entities that inhabit the spirit world.

Chapter 3: Creatures of the Night

Danny told me the following story from his childhood. He does not remember the incident, but was told it some years later by his mother.

> When Danny was two years old, he fell out of a low guava tree. He broke his left thigh bone and developed a fever. Since he was the first grandchild, his grandfather was very concerned about him and massaged his leg every day.[36] Unfortunately, there was no improvement, so Danny was taken to the hospital. At this point, the bone in his leg started to rot, and it had to be removed. He was told it later completely regrew [Danny showed me a long scar running down the inside of his left thigh, which he said was the scar left from the removal operation].
>
> He was put in a ward with four beds along one wall; his bed was at the end. One night, the patient two beds from him died. On the next night, the patient in the bed beside his also died. Then somebody decided that the patient in the bed furthest from Danny was really an *asuwang*, and called in an *albularyo*.[37] The suspected *asuwang* was very hostile to the healer. Somehow, it was defeated. Danny said he'd had a lucky escape: if the healer had not been called in, the *asuwang* would have got him next.

This chapter introduces the background knowledge which informs people's understandings of the spirit world. Many of these concepts are germane to beliefs regarding sickness and healing. As with any aspect of belief discussed in this thesis, not everyone subscribes to every concept at all times; however, they are givens which most people will address, either as accepted truths, other people's silly superstitions, or something between these two extremes.[38]

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section introduces basic concepts such as the nature of the spirit world and protective charms, while the second section provides brief summaries of the types of spirit beings which Asogue Street residents recognise as either existing or as something which other people believe to exist (not all of these are to be found near Tugatog). The final section is a case study of the death and

burial of Bernardo Pingol, and highlights a number of the customs and beliefs pertaining to health, sickness, life, death and the spirit world.

Introductory Concepts

The word "mundane" has two senses: in the first sense, the word applies to events, activities or things which are common, everyday and perhaps a little boring. The second sense refers to the world: that which is mundane is of the world, of earthly existence. The two senses are vaguely related, in that the extraordinary or the uncanny are neither quotidian, nor quite of this world. Western literary and folk traditions[39] identify a range or order of existence that has little to do with the mundane, the earth. This is often called "the supernatural", but may also be referred to by a variety of names. The supernatural can include a wide range of phenomena or experiences, but they all share the characteristic of being outside the scope of the mundane.[40] The supernatural is just that: something outside of nature, extra-mundane, beyond the everyday, earthbound existence of humans.

By contrast, Asogue Street residents do not necessarily perceive the supernatural as being beyond nature, as extra-mundane (although they might not articulate it in quite this way). In other words that which I might describe as "supernatural" is not, to them, "beyond nature" at all. Instead, the spirit entities in which Filipinos believe are "mundane", as much a part of the quotidian, hum-drum round of earthly existence as human beings or dogs or trees. To a Filipino, the supernatural — the spirits — are perfectly natural. It is not that the residents of Asogue Street do not differentiate between the spirits and the material world; rather, they see them as quite different orders of existence, but co-existing in the everyday world. If *sacred* refers to the "abnormal, special, other-worldly" (Leach 1958:97), then the spirits, like people, tend towards the *profane*.

According to several informants,[41] there are three orders of existence in the world. These are the *first*, *second* and *third kinds* (of life). The first kind is made up of people, whether they be Filipinos, foreigners, neighbours, friends, kin or whatever. They are all still human beings. The second kind

are the animals and plants, that which is recognisably alive, but also recognisably not human. Then there is the Third Kind, also known as *engkanto*, *namatatanda* ("the old ones"), "those unlike us" [E] or the *hindi makita* ("that which cannot be seen"). The Third Kind refers to entities which in the Western tradition would be termed the supernatural. However, I believe this "supernatural" character — that is, un-natural — is not the case with the spirit beings of Filipino belief, and I want to stress that the above tripartite division implicitly identifies the Third Kind as falling within the ambit of the mundane, of the things which are extant in the world. It should be noted that God, the angels and the devils are specifically excluded from the Third Kind — they *are* beyond the mundane.

Not everyone accepted the existence of the Third Kind, certainly not at all times or in the same way. When I write that "informants said", it is important to note that various informants gave slightly differing accounts of events, incidents or entities. Further, some said that they didn't believe in a particular entity because they hadn't yet seen it. Or they believed in, say, the White Lady in general because of personal experience or the experience of a close family member, usually back in the home province; however, they did not therefore believe in the White Lady rumoured to inhabit Asogue Street. Others said they disbelieved, but were simply answering my questions based on what they had heard in the past, especially from the stories told by older people. I noticed, though, that some people claimed not to believe in such "superstitious beliefs" (their words) because we now lived in a "scientific age" (again, their words), yet continued to take precautions against evil influences or use charms to bring good luck and prosperity into the house.

Malicious spirits: Maligno

The world, then, is inhabited by three broad classes of entities: humans, animals and spirits. None of the three kinds live in complete isolation from the other two, and so there will, almost as a matter of course, be some degree of interaction between humans and the Third Kind. This interaction can take a variety of forms, which may be ultimately beneficial or harmful to

humans, since spirits have the power to bless people, make them wealthy, give them health or help — but they can also injure, blight or even kill. Generally, people are most concerned with interactions with the Third Kind which may result in harm to themselves, their family or friends, or their property.

Generally, humans and the Third Kind do not have much truck with each other. Rather, they have their own interests and daily round of pursuits, which do not intersect. What the Third Kind actually do when they are not in some form of interchange with humans was not discussed by my informants: I gather that most people weren't much interested in the daily life of the Third Kind, at least insofar as it did not impact on them. It is not that the Third Kind are "anthropocentric" (Douglas 1969:81), impersonal forces which react directly to the behaviour of humans; rather, they are agents in their own right, which engaged in their own pursuits and activities when not somehow brought into conflict with the First Kind. The unspoken attitude seemed to be one of "live and let live": it was in people's best interests not to disturb or come to the attention of the Third Kind if they could possibly avoid it, and if the Third Kind were content to do their own thing and leave humans alone, then the humans were similarly willing to leave the spirits be. However, when they did attract the attention of the Third Kind — which occurred fairly regularly — the result was usually not beneficial to humans.

Most Third Kind are believed to be neutral, or vaguely friendly, towards humans, if they are left alone. They may make their dwellings in trees, earth mounds or near human habitations, but, like the First Kind, are willing to live and let live.[42] However, sometimes they may be injured or offended and will then retaliate, usually by making the perpetrator of the offence unwell. They may instead choose to attack a close family member. Others of the Third Kind are malignant by nature, and may actually seek out humans to injure them. Often, when a human has been harmed by the Third Kind, people call the entity responsible for the sickness or injury a *maligno*.

A *maligno* is not a particular sort of entity: instead, it is any spirit which has acted, or is acting, in a malicious fashion. Thus, beings which are

considered to be ordinarily neutral (or even in some way beneficial), may be referred to as *maligno* when they have caused a sickness or injury. The term is used as a kind of shorthand, where the cause of a sickness or other event has been identified as being through the workings of the Third Kind, but the actual entity involved has not been precisely identified. Although not one of the Third Kind, *demonyo* (demons) were also sometimes referred to as *maligno*, because they sought to harm humans.

Since everyday interactions with the Third Kind generally involved sickness or some other misfortune befalling a person, the term *maligno* was commonly applied to the Third Kind. However, it should be stressed that the Third Kind were usually only referred to by informants — aside from in response to my questions — when they were identified as the cause of some (usually unfortunate) event. Thus, on an everyday basis, the Third Kind were represented as harming people, but this should not be taken to mean that they were considered to be necessarily malign. Instead, the *maligno* often turned out to be an entity usually considered to be neutral who had, in that particular instance, acted in a way harmful to humans; and that this malicious behaviour was a reaction by the Third Kind to some action or attitude on the part of humans.

Unnatural Animals

The Third Kind and sorcery are often connected with deformed or outsize animals. The exact relationship which holds between a deformed creature and a particular instance of magic or the spirits varies on a case-by-case basis, and was not always clearly articulated by informants.

Occasionally, the Third Kind take the form of unusual or remarkable animals. Perhaps unnatural animals, by their very nature, are also powerful and able to harm:

> Ofelia's father [who lives on Panay Island] once injured a white frog, and suffered some pain in the legs thereafter. To stop the pain, he eventually had to make an offering to the spirit which had become, or was represented by, the frog.

Certain sorts of abnormality are tied to specific aspects of the Third Kind. For instance, *asuwang* are often believed to have the power to transform themselves into outsize dogs, pigs or snakes. It is best to be careful if one sees very large animals, especially in the wild. Other Third Kind may appear as animals, but with exceptionally long tails (the *sigbin* is an example). The *Harimanok* (King of the Chickens) appears as a normal cock, but with very long tail feathers, and often a crown worn around its neck. I was unable to gather much information about the *harimanok*, except that it helped people, usually by bringing good luck or wealth.[43]

Animals with an excess or shortage of sensory organs or limbs may indicate the presence of sorcerers, who sometimes use such creatures as servants or familiars. Additionally, some informants spoke of the *trabungko*, which sometimes appears as a two-tailed animal, and is often associated with a magical light which bestows great power on the possessor. For every type of animal, there is one — and only one — *trabungko*: of all the bats in the world, there will be only one which is a *trabungko*, and the same holds true for rats or elephants. The *trabungko* I heard of was a gecko.

> My [Natividad's] father saw a lizard once in a clay jar. He could see light coming from the jar, the lizard was disgorging a light. He went to get the light, but the lizard was smart and swallowed it again. When you see that, get it very quickly — cover it with black cloth so the lizard can't see it any more. If it sees the light, it will take it from you. [If you get the light] don't tell anyone you have it. It gives you power, it gives you authority, but I don't know what for. It was very small, but very bright.

It is not only animals that have abnormalities which mark them as having a special relationship with the Third Kind or with sorcery. Humans may also have special powers — especially to see that which is invisible — if they have the correct birthmarks.

Seeing Is Believing

It has already been mentioned that the Third Kind are also known as the *hindi makita*, or "that which cannot be seen". The entities are, by and large, invisible. However, it is possible to see them under certain conditions.

The first instance is when one of the Third Kind chooses to make itself visible. They may do this from time to time, perhaps in order to fulfil some role: for instance, a *tikbalang* may choose to become visible in order to guide the rightful owner of a hoard of treasure to its location. Again, a White Lady may make herself visible so that attention is drawn to her plight.

Otherwise, the Third Kind are generally only seen by people who have special abilities which enable them to do so. These abilities are generally indicated by the presence of a birthmark or some other slight physical abnormality,[44] such as white patches on the skin, or small black marks inside the eye. I do not know exactly why such abnormalities should enable the possessing person to see that which is normally invisible: informants told me they didn't know why either, but it was true and, anyway, that's what the old people had told them.

Often, when discussing the Third Kind, informants would say that they did not believe in a particular entity or event, because they had not yet seen it. At the same time, they would also say that they believed in something because they — or someone they trusted — had seen it. "To see is to believe" [E] was the phrase commonly employed to justify belief, or non-belief, in a particular matter. Thus those who carried the birthmarks, including children, were given some credence when they spoke of having sighted the Third Kind: they were a link between the spirits and the First Kind.

Religion

Unlike the Third Kind, God was not subsumed by the rule that "to see is to believe". God, the angels and the devils were believed by informants to exist, regardless of the fact that no one had ever seen God (although people could point to miraculous or diabolic apparitions, such as at Manaoag or Guadalupe). Whereas, for many people, existence of the Third Kind required proof by sighting, God was a given that did not need to be seen.

Religion was an important, if not always explicit, aspect of life for the residents of Asogue Street. Everyone I knew was a self-proclaimed

Christian, if of varying degrees of devotion. The vast majority were Catholic, with a few born-again Christians. People were also aware of the existence of the Mormons, the *Iglesia ni Kristo* ["Church of Christ": an indigenous Christian denomination] and Islam. Devotion to God and the Virgin Mary was an underlying current of most people's religious experience; however, actual attendance at church services was rare, except for occasions such as Christmas or baptisms. Catholicism was a shared, but intensely private, matter: people told me they prayed or put their faith in God, but external manifestations of this were limited to household icons and the wearing of images of Mary or crucifixes.

Keeping Safe

The Third Kind usually can't be seen, but they can be easily offended and, once aroused, can induce sickness or even death in their victims. As if that wasn't enough, there are also sorcerers who can injure or kill from a distance. Although neither threat is ever-present, they do exist and they must be accounted for if one is to live.

There are a number of ways to obtain protection from *malignos* or sorcery, but the most important protective measure is the *anting-anting*. The word *anting-anting* covers a variety of objects, which may take many forms, have specific or general powers, and histories. The one element they share in common is that all *anting-anting* are items which protect the wearer or user from the malign intent of others, whether sorcerers or the Third Kind.

Writers such as Lieban (1967), Henry (1986:8), and Licauco (1986:3-115) have described some fairly elaborate *anting-anting*: items which, in order to have the power to ward off evil, must be obtained by diving to the centre of a lake, or by collecting ingredients from cemeteries or churches during Holy Week (the week immediately preceding, and including, Good Friday at Easter). To my informants, such *anting-anting* were both rare and immensely powerful; more usually, they used Christian symbols (the crucifix, rosary beads) to ward off possible danger.

Willy told me this story of the *anting-anting* his deceased grandfather found in rural Pangasinan:

> One day, my grandfather and his brother were outside when lightning struck the top of a tree. When my grandfather's brother tried to climb the tree, it was too hot, but when my grandfather tried to climb it, it was cool. So whatever was up there was meant for him. He found some "stones of the lightning", a small triangular book filled with Latin,[45] and a small figurine of the Santo Niño [the infant Jesus]. Very powerful *anting-anting* which had been given to him by God because he was *mabait* [of good character, morally good]. My grandfather had strong faith. He could use the *anting-anting* to pasture a cow or to finish the work in a field within a morning. Also, if you fought with him, he could use the *anting-anting* to stop you moving about until you were sorry. When he died, my father was in Manila and by the time he returned, my grandfather was already buried. The stones were lost.

Although a number of people agreed with Willy about the attributes of lightning stones (also known as "teeth of the lightning") as a type of *anting-anting*, his sister said that she had never heard that her grandfather had possessed such a thing. Lightning teeth are quite potent in that their power extends beyond serving merely to ward off the Third Kind or sorcery: others said they gave the possessor great bodily strength.

The most potent *anting-anting* are thought to bestow on the wearer protection from bullets and raindrops; however, most are not nearly this powerful — it is only those *anting-anting* which take great effort to be acquired that have such power. Many, particularly those using Christian symbols, can be bought at markets and have minimal protective power.

> I was once asked whether I didn't think it was dangerous to talk about the Third Kind so much — my questioner wanted to know whether I had any protection. At this point, it occurred to me that I was carrying a religious icon, and brought out my St Jude's medal.[46] I told them it was an *anting-anting*. When I was asked if it would protect me from bullets, I replied that it wouldn't, but that I was safe from sorcery.

Although my questioner knew I was joking, since I had already explained that I did not really believe in the Third Kind,[47] he did not doubt that Christian icons could be used as *anting-anting*.

> I met a man who was visiting Asogue Street for the funeral of a relative. He told me that he lived near Mount Banahaw, and was part of a religious community there.[48] He said that, in a dream, the Holy Spirit had revealed certain Latin words to him, which were to be his *anting-anting*. He showed me where he had tattooed the "words" (in fact only jumbled letters) on his shoulders and chest. He said that these made him invulnerable to *maligno* and sorcery.

Most people wore cheap, plastic crosses or depictions of the Madonna and Child as necklaces or pinned to a child's clothes. Whenever I asked why they wore such items, I was invariably told that it was to protect them from *maligno* or sorcery. Admittedly, some people would then add that they did not in fact believe in such things, but they wore them anyway. I suspect this may be the result of it being better to be safe than sorry. Rosaries were often placed beneath the pillows of sleeping children, especially if they had been left for a nap and were not under direct supervision. Again, this was to protect them from *maligno*, which might attempt to harm them while they are asleep, and therefore at their most vulnerable.

Aside from religious symbols and other powerful items (such as stingray tails and lightning teeth) worn on, about or as part of the body, protective charms can also be placed at the threshold of the house, particularly on or close to the front door, just outside the building. Usually these protective "wards" — since they were used to ward off malign influences, whether *maligno* or sorcery — consisted of nothing more than a drawing of a cross or Calvary cross on the front door in pen or chalk.

Although *anting-anting* are often worn to protect individuals from the malice of the Third Kind and sorcerers, people still become sick through the actions of those others. In the next section I describe some of those sickness-causing others, the Third Kind.

The Third Kind

As might be expected, the "Third Kind" subsumes a great variety of entities, each with its own particular characteristics and natures. Just as there are many different nationalities and individuals contained within the category of the First Kind, so too are there many different varieties and individual spirits in the Third. Some are neutral or even positively-oriented to human beings, while many others are generally more malign: although there is a greater number of malign types of Third Kind than neutral, the former are significantly rarer in terms of actual numbers, and so they are much less often encountered by humans. Even when they *are* encountered, it is in places far removed from present-day Asogue Street.

Since the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th Century, friars, folklorists and anthropologists have collected a plethora of different categories of Third Kind from stories told all over the Philippines. In some cases, although they bear different names and are represented in the tales or experiences of groups from widely disparate language areas, the entities are recognisably similar to each other. These different types of "lower mythological entity" run into the dozens, each with its distinctive name, characteristics and nature (for instance, see Ramos 1969; 1971a; 1971b; Jocano 1989:8-9). However, the characteristics of the Third Kind have not remained static, at least in Asogue Street. Their natures have changed, such that different types have melded into a handful of entities. Additionally, the precise characteristics of any one entity depended on who I asked at the time: people's level or extent of knowledge varied widely.

I think there are a variety of reasons for this: firstly, the literature on "lower mythology" (i.e. the Third Kind) was collected at certain times and in certain places: those times and places are different to those in which I did fieldwork, and, of course, my informants are different people. Much of the myth-collection was carried out by the friars during the Spanish occupation, or by folklorists such as Ramos during the 1960s, and thus represents a kind of general survey of beliefs regarding the characteristics of the Third Kind at

that time. I am not suggesting that the data collected at those times are in some way incorrect, merely that a certain degree of change has occurred.

Additionally, the nature of the repositories of the lore pertaining to the Third Kind has changed in that period. While knowledge about such matters is still transmitted from the old to the young as stories, admonitions ("be good or the *asuwang* will get you!"), and games, there has been a much greater cross-pollination of ideas between different ethnic groups and — I believe — a simplification of the characteristics of the Third Kind because much of the knowledge is now transmitted through the mass media.

A number of factors are involved in this simplification. Firstly, Asogue Street does not have a long history of settlement. It is an urban area with a population comprised of individuals and families which have migrated there, almost entirely from rural areas. There is no overwhelming place of origin for these "settlers" — although there are sizeable minorities from Panay Island, they range from all over the Philippines. Thus, anyone who comes to Asogue Street has their own cultural baggage of stories, beliefs and ideas which they gained through talking with older kin and peers back in the home province. These beliefs and ideas are further modified as they interact with people in Asogue Street and Manila, while they in turn modify other people's ideas. It is a continuous process of negotiation and re-negotiation, adjustment, disagreement and accommodation.

Additionally, there are few "elders" in Asogue Street to whom people can turn for definitive answers to any questions pertaining to the lore of the Third Kind. Most people settled in the area while young, leaving the elders behind: there was thus a severe break in the continuity of the passing-on of knowledge. Moreover, communications infrastructure in the Philippines is so poor that people were unable to, say, telephone their grandparents in order to obtain a "definitive" answer to a question, either their own or the anthropologist's. The nature of folkloric knowledge is highly variable and in flux:

> ...[Wayland] Hand was later to declare at a public lecture in Manila that what is invented and then passed off as folklore can be considered folklore too. (Ramos 1971a:xii)

If only because it is invented to cover gaps in an individual's knowledge. However, any such inventions would almost always make sense within the framework of a particular culture. It is, for instance, unlikely that a question regarding the Third Kind would elicit a response from an Asogue Street resident that involved visits by extraterrestrials.

To use a metaphor, if traditional knowledge is a baton handed from age to youth in a kind of relay race, then the residents of Asogue Street are now runners in a completely different athletics field to the one in which their progenitors had run. Bringing only a partial baton with them to the new field, they attempted to complete it by using scraps of wood from other runners and from other representations of the Third Kind, particularly as portrayed in the mass media.

So apart from neighbourly discussions, the vacuum in knowledge which resulted from their migration to Manila was also partially filled through horror films (at the cinema and on television) or through the ever-popular comic books (see also Jocano 1975:18).

The Philippine film industry is one of the largest in the world in terms of annual output. Cinema admission is relatively cheap, while most families own a television set or have a neighbour who does, and Tagalog-language films are staple fare for both media. Additionally, horror and supernatural comics produced in the vernacular are very cheap and easily available. All these media disseminate information about the Third Kind, and tend to simplify the entities' natures as they do so. One reason for this simplification is that film and comics are not suitable media for in-depth analyses of any subject. Additionally, the Philippine industries aim for cheap and rapid production, so that profitability is achieved through a high volume and fast turnover of cheaply-produced comics and films. This tends to further mitigate against the complex treatment of any subject-matter.

I believe that the portrayals of the Third Kind in the mass media tend to influence the ways in which informants envision the nature and

characteristics of the Third Kind, and that this mode of information transmission is every bit as important as the stories told "back home" by the grandparents or aged uncles and aunts. It is telling that the categories of Third Kind and their characteristics, as told to me by informants, tended to agree with each other in their broad outlines (details might vary) — and that these generally conformed with the representations I encountered in Tagalog comics and films. Produced as it is by corporations — loci of wealth and power — mass media representations of the Third Kind both draw upon and partially inform the understandings of Filipinos.[49]

The mass media has influenced to some degree the ways in which informants characterised or defined the Third Kind; however, I would resist any suggestion that their beliefs were not "authentic", simply because of this influence. It should be remembered that belief systems constantly change, and are constantly reacting to (or against) new ideas, whether these challenging new ideas come from comic books or theologians. The mass media through its representations has been influential in modifying the commonly-held assumptions about the Third Kind, and it has made a profit in doing so. Yet this does not mean that the changes that have been wrought are somehow unauthentic: just as representations became more christianised with the gradual conversion of the *indios* to Catholicism without losing authenticity, so too has the repackaging of the myths in a more marketable form not affected their authenticity. Certainly, they are not *traditional*, but tradition is not the sole source of authenticity.

This influence of the mass media on Filipino beliefs is not a one-way street. Filipinos are quite well aware of the difference between a story told by their grandparents and a story contained in a comic book: the former may well be true, but the latter is — obviously — a work of fiction. As such, the fictional representations must conform, in broad outline, to traditionally-held concepts if it is to be successful. By "successful" I mean, not necessarily that it produces a complete suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader, but that the reader (of, say, a comic) must be satisfied enough to want to buy the next edition. Broadly speaking, the comic book *asuwang* should behave like

the *asuwang* of folklore, and not like *duwende*. In this sense, at least, comics and films must conform in some degree to tradition: it is not that they depart from traditional views, rather that in their representations they tend to simplify those views.

It should also be remembered that Philippine "lower mythology" has also drawn, to some extent, on other folkloric traditions, particularly Spain and the United States. This has led to the appropriation and localisation of particular spirit beings. For instance, the *sirena* (a water spirit which lures people to their deaths by drowning) may be an appropriation of the mermaid of European tradition, rather than an indigenous, parallel spirit being. Even if the *sirena* is an indigenous spirit being, its representations (as a beautiful woman from the waist up, and a fish from the waist down) may well have been "borrowed" from the West. Again, the portrayal of certain of the Third Kind in comics and informants' descriptions seems to owe more to Walt Disney than to provincial tradition.

Above: A duwende *and friends — the* duwende *is reminiscent of Disney's version of one of the Seven Dwarfs.*

Close Encounters With The Third Kind

At this point, I will introduce the more common types of Third Kind. Few of these are to be found near Asogue Street, but all were mentioned on a variety of occasions (some were quite common topics of conversation as causes of sickness and injury, or were regularly represented in the mass media).

The *duwende*, or *laman-lupa* ("muscles of the earth/ground") are approximately one to two feet tall. They often live in communities, perhaps headed by a king or chieftain, and such communities can be under the earth, in small — normally invisible — dwellings on the ground, in trees, or in one case, in a well. They occasionally live alone, in much the same sorts of places. *Duwende* are believed to wear small, pointed hats and tunics. Both are usually bright red, and in the comics they are thusly portrayed, but sometimes with the addition of pointed shoes or boots and long beards.

Informants described *duwende* as being either "black" or "white": black *duwende* tended to be more malignant, and far more willing to cause injury or sickness to humans, while the white *duwende* were generally more neutral or benign. If left alone, the white *duwende* prefer to leave humans to their own devices, and generally only act against people if they are themselves injured or threatened. One healer, Mang Leno,[50] told me that he was under the tutelage of a white *duwende* king, and that this *duwende* often offered advice and insights into the nature of particular patients' cases:

> The black ones are brave and cruel. The white ones are patient and kind. They are enemies, they fight. The black ones are ill-behaved. They [the white *duwende*] help me in treating the sick. If I need help, Jun [the white *duwende* king] comes to see me at 3am. When I call Jun, and Jun appears, he smells very bad. But when we are together, it's a very good smell. If I need help, it's immediate.[51]

The *duwende* had several colonies or residences around Asogue Street. In particular, the elementary school and the compound in which I lived were known for having a lot of resident *duwende*. In addition to the white and black *duwende* "kingdoms" in the schoolyard mentioned by Mang Leno, there were apparently a number of the creatures which resided in various parts of the compound at various times, usually centring on Noemie's first house. There had originally been a well at the house, according to Ofelia:

> This well was behind the house [at the time the story was told, the well had been submerged by flooding], and in those days, it was still in use. There was an old man, who doesn't live in Asogue Street any more, who came to the well to get water for

> a bath. He tried to pull the bucket up, but it was very heavy, and he had such trouble pulling it up that he decided to look and see why. When he looked into the well, he saw so many *duwende* holding on to the rope. He was so surprised that he dropped the rope and ran into the street, yelling that he'd seen some *duwende*. When other people followed him to the well, the *duwende* were gone. I don't know what happened after that.

The distinction between black and white *duwende* did not seem to be well-thought-out: although I was told that black *duwende* were malignant creatures and that white *duwende* were not, this did not seem to be a determinant factor when someone was injured or made sick by them. Instead, the major factor in whether or not a *duwende* acted to harm was the activity of the afflicted person. Informants said that the *duwende* had injured or sickened someone in response to some action or proposed action on the part of the afflicted person — or a relative or friend. Although this may be merely a weakness in my data, I suspect that — with the exception of the healer mentioned above — the distinction between black and white had more to do with whether a sickness caused by a *duwende* could be related by those involved to an identifiable event (and that a normally neutral entity, a white *duwende*, had been offended), or whether no identifiable event could be discerned (in which case, the sickness was the work of a normally malicious spirit, such as a black *duwende*). The victim did not usually know that they had become sick through the work of a *duwende*, or any other spirit: sicknesses were not necessarily identifiable to the non-healer as being the result of action by a spirit being, but could have a number of possible causes. In most cases, diagnosis by a healer was required in order to formally determine whether or not a *duwende* or some other entity had in fact caused the sickness, although the patient and/or others may have had their suspicions.

The *duwende* would retaliate if they were injured (even accidentally), insulted or made to feel threatened, as when it was suggested that a tree be cut down, said tree being the home of one or more *duwende*. Retaliation from a *duwende* could also be invited by accidentally urinating on them.

> A student at the local elementary school had gone into a rigid, locked-up stance, and could not be moved. His voice had become very weak. A healer was consulted, who diagnosed the boy as having been attacked by a white *duwende*. The *duwende* had been offended when the boy had accidentally urinated on it while passing water against a bush.

Before my first trip to the provinces (where there are a great many more trees than in Manila), I was told that, if I were to urinate against a tree, I should give prior warning of this, so that any spirits in the vicinity would have time to get out of the way.

It should be apparent that *duwende* often injure humans in retaliation for actions where the people did not intend to harm the *duwende*. In the above case, the *duwende* was splashed by urine, when the perpetrator of the act (and subsequent victim of a *duwende* attack) had no bad intention. *Duwende* react to our actions regardless of the intent of those actions. There is, therefore, no effective moral dimension to those explanations of sickness which rely on *duwende* as causative agents: sickness does not come to those who have transgressed against societal norms (and are therefore being punished by the *duwende qua* guardian of those norms[52]); rather, the injured person happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. They were not transgressors who were punished, but unlucky victims. Sickness when caused by a *duwende* is merely something that happens because the world is populated with spirits who can injure when they feel threatened.

What did the *duwende* do when not interacting with humans? Most people seem to have assumed that the *duwende* led their own existence, and did their own things, with lives not unlike those of the First Kind. Occasionally, however, they did involve themselves more deeply with people.

> Noemie told me that she didn't really believe there was some kind of supernatural entity in her old house [Noemie and her husband Andy moved house during my stay in Asogue Street: both houses were in same compound], because she had never seen it. But she had heard things, usually the sound of someone else moving cutlery when she was alone in the

> house. She said that one night, while they were moving house, she had slept on the floor of the old house and at midnight she had heard the sounds of people doing the laundry and children playing. She said she was definitely awake, not dreaming. Andy said that he saw something, he said it was just shadows. When I asked what the shadows looked like, he pointed to my cigarette smoke and said they looked just like that.
>
> Noemie said there were times when she had heard Sweet [their daughter] talking to people in the house and asking them to come and play with her. Noemie does not believe there is any of the Third Kind in the house, because she has not seen them. I asked her what it might be, *if* there were Third Kind living there, and she replied that it might be *duwende*.
>
> When Rommel [a cousin of Noemie's] was a small child, he used to cry all the time at night, and was very scared [this occurred in a third house in the same compound]. They took Rommel to an *albularyo*, who said that there were *duwende* there, and that a *duwende* princess[53] wanted to marry Rommel.

Duwende were generally invoked only as the cause of accidents or illness, or as something that caused a fright when people became aware of their proximity. It was not that *duwende* deliberately attempted to frighten people: this was a characteristic common to all of the Third Kind. When someone saw one of the Third Kind, or became aware of their presence, this was usually described by informants as a frightening event. This was accepted as part of the nature of the Third Kind, rather than an imputation of any deliberate intent. Fright occurs both as a result of becoming aware of the presence of the Third Kind, and acts as an indicator of their presence: an unexplained sense of fright (particularly if one's body hairs are standing on end) warns one that the Third Kind are about.

The *duwendes*' existence — insofar as my informants seemed to be concerned — was normally only invoked to explain a misfortune or some other supernatural event or encounter, including offers of marriage from them. Although informants considered the *duwende* to be carrying on their own "lives" independently of humans, they were not a matter of concern except when they interacted with people. Informants did not consider that *duwende* were in any way evil (except possibly black *duwende*) or

"unnatural": certainly, there seemed to be no idea among informants that the creatures had any less reason or right to existence than humans. That humans occasionally suffered at the hands of the creatures seemed to be viewed as simply one of the facts of life, if sometimes a debilitating nuisance.[54] Although *duwende* were known to be living in the area, no one considered hunting them down — as might be the case with other, more dangerous entities.

Just as the *duwende* were encountered regularly around Asogue Street because they lived there, the White Lady was also a recurrent source of encounters and gossip.

White Ladies are the spirits or ghosts of women who have died in pain, or fear, or alone. Their deaths are always bound up with an unavenged or unexpiated crime — rape, murder. They are called "White Ladies" [E] because of the colour of the clothes they wear: white dresses were said by informants to have been worn by women in the "old days". Their faces are usually hidden by long dark tresses, and informants generally considered them to be Filipinas. There was almost always a story attached to a particular White Lady, which explained "her" origin.

The White Lady does not deliberately harm people. Instead, it is said that she roams near the place of her death, seeking recompense or vengeance for the crimes committed against her. She is unable to carry out the actions herself, and needs humans to help; unfortunately, it is often impossible for the living to render justice on her behalf, especially if the crime was committed long ago. Thus, if she seeks a decent burial, it may be impossible, now, to find the body. If she wants her rapists/murderers to be brought to justice, they themselves may be dead and long forgotten.

It is said that, in the time of the Japanese occupation, when Tugatog was still a largely unsettled area, the Japanese killed a large number of Filipinos — mostly women, children and the aged — and buried them in a mass grave somewhere near Asogue Street. No one knows exactly where the mass grave is, but it is described as being "*malapit lang*" — close by. There is a White Lady who is occasionally glimpsed near midnight or

towards dawn, wandering the area, and people say that she was one of those murdered by the Japanese soldiers in those days. Nobody knows how she can be helped.

Not everyone believes in the existence of the White Lady, including Ganny, a middle-aged man who lives in the compound where many of the sightings occurred.

> Ganny told me that every morning [before going to work], he makes his *baon* [boxed lunch] just before dawn. He always looks out of the kitchen window, because he knows the stories of the White Lady. He says he has never once seen her.

As with the *duwende*, the White Lady was known to inhabit a geographic area which coincided with that of the human inhabitants of Asogue Street. Like almost all of the Third Kind, the White Lady existed in the physical world, the mundane world. She did not come from some other region of the universe, as might be the case with angels or demons, but was, instead, a neighbour, albeit a non-human one. Although her appearance may frighten witnesses, the White Lady is not thought to be malign or dangerous; rather, she is in search of assistance. By contrast, Pinches (1984:385) reports that residents of the urban poor community of Tatalon believe the White Lady to be a malignant harbinger of misfortune and death.

There were also stories about a White Lady which roamed the elementary school buildings. This may or may not be the same spirit.

On the other hand, *multo*, ghosts or spirits of the dead, may be encountered anywhere, but are more likely to be found outside of Manila. The term *multo* is sometimes used as an alternative name for the White Lady, or as a catch-all phrase to represent an undefined spirit which was probably once a living human. This is similar to the use of the term *maligno* to represent an undefined, but harmful, entity. At other times, *multo* refers to the spirits of the recently dead, who are considered to be benevolent towards those they loved during life, and somewhat curious as to how their family and friends are faring in the world of the living. Since they were once living people, *multo* represent a kind of blurring of the boundaries between

the First and Third Kinds, or a movement from one order of existence to another: they were once flesh-and-blood human beings, and now they cannot be seen [*hindi makita*]. The spirits of the dead are only temporarily resident on Earth, and eventually go on to the afterlife, to heaven.

When there is a violent or sudden death, a ball of fire may appear on rainy nights, floating in the air, above the scene of the death. According to Marlon:

> As a small child, in Zamboanga [on the island of Mindanao], I saw a floating fireball. It was raining. Later, they found a man who had been run over and killed.

Referred to as "St Elmo's Fire", the fireball will remain until the blood is completely washed away. I am not sure whether it is the spirit of the dead, or some by-product of the death: some say that it is caused by the blood which was spilled in an untimely and violent fashion. Although many people have heard of the fireballs, I am unaware of anyone else who has seen one.

Even "benevolent" spirits of the newly dead can attack the living, if they are so inclined.

> The spirits of the recently dead can cause stomach aches in strangers who come near the house the spirit occupied while still alive. This can be easily cured by the still-living relatives, who merely have to say some prayers over the sick person. It was not clear to my informant why the dead should do this.

Whenever a bottle of liquor (anything stronger than beer) is opened at a drinking session, a little of the liquor is poured on the ground. I was variously told that this was to appease "those we cannot see", or that it was "for the ancestors", "for my dead father" or "for the Devil".[55] In other words, it was so that the Third Kind could share in the alcohol — sharing, especially of alcohol, is of central importance to Filipinos, while selfishness is socially unacceptable. Any man is welcome to join in a drinking session; and it appears that the Third Kind are welcome, as well.

The White Lady, *multo*[56] and the *duwende* share real space with the residents of Asogue Street, rather than inhabiting some otherworldly realm. I

will now turn to a description of those Third Kind which were reported to me as not living in Manila, but only in the provinces, where there were less people. Again, these existed in the real world, although in a part of it that was distant from Asogue Street.

Asuwang.[57] Perhaps the most fearsome of the Third Kind, the *asuwang* is mainly represented in the stories told to informants by their parents and grandparents as entities encountered by humans in the provinces, sometimes several generations before the present. The *asuwang* is also heavily represented in comic books and in Filipino horror films, such as the "Shake, Rattle and Roll" series. There are a number of alternative terms for the *asuwang*, including *wak-wak* (from the sound it is said to make, "like a big bird"), and *manananggal*.[58] I was told that there were no *asuwang* in Manila, although there are many to be found in the province of Capiz,[59] on Panay Island (a number of my informants, or their families, were originally from Panay).

The following story was told by Nati of her childhood in Panay.

> It was at the time of the Japanese [occupation]. At about 8pm, I went out to buy P20 of salt. I had to go perhaps 20 metres to the store. My companion was [about 12 years old] and it was a full moon. I was 16, with a little girl for a companion. We saw a bird, but when we got close, we realised it wasn't a bird at all, but a *wak-wak*. We ran back inside the house, and waited. We heard it make a noise outside, "Waaaak, waaaaak." There were not many people [at that time], they had been evacuated because of the Japanese. When we got inside the house, my grandmother came out with us to get the salt, but the *wak-wak* wasn't there, it had gone. It looked like a very big bird.

The *asuwang* has a human form; in a sense, it *is* human, and can live among people, although it prefers to live either in out-of-the-way villages or by itself in a deserted area. At certain times, usually at night, it grows an enormous pair of wings resembling those of a bat, and then the top half of the body separates from the legs and flies off in search of human prey. The legs stay where the body separated from them, until the *asuwang* returns to reunite the two halves of its body, and regain human form. The *asuwang* feeds on humans, and prefers the liver, or, more especially, an unborn

foetus. This is not a symbolic feeding: the victim of an *asuwang* attack would be found torn apart. Unlike the European vampire, the *asuwang* does not infect its victims through its attacks: the victim is killed and does not rise again from the dead (at least, it does not do so in the versions which were told to me). The creatures can be killed in a number of ways, and there seems to be no clear consensus on the techniques which may be used. It is possible to kill them by impaling with a spear, a silver bullet, a copper knife, a stingray tail (these are also useful as *anting-anting* and for battling sorcerers) or destruction by fire. It is also possible to kill an *asuwang* by pouring ash, salt or chilli onto the bottom half of the body while the top half is hunting. This makes it impossible for them to rejoin and, should the *asuwang* be touched by sunlight while separated from its legs, it will die.[60] I was unable to determine why ash, salt or chilli should have this effect.

Asuwang are also believed to have the ability to change into a large animal, such as a dog, pig or snake, with the dog form the most common. I was told that, if one encounters a large snake in the forest, then that snake may also be a person — that is, an *asuwang*. They are also unable to look people in the eye, and have "slippery" skin, so are hard to catch and hold. Although the *asuwang* is not a vampire, its predatory nature is reminiscent of the European entity. Simultaneously, the ability to change shape, from human to animal, resembles the European werewolf.

They can reproduce in two ways. The first way was more often referred to, and I have seen it used as a plot device in horror comics, whereas the second method was explained to me as being more a tradition in the Visayas. I will discuss the more commonly-mentioned method first.

All *asuwang*, according to the stories, have within their chest or stomach a small globe, ball, pebble or gem. This stone represents in some way the characteristics or nature of the *asuwang*, the creature's *asuwang*-ness, as it were. When an *asuwang* is dying (either because people have killed it, or from accident or disease or old age), it will attempt to pass this stone on to one of its close relatives, by regurgitating it when the relative has come close to the body. The stone will jump into the other person's mouth,

pass into their body cavity, and from that moment on, the relative has become an *asuwang*, although there may be a period of adjustment and reconciliation to the new role. This is a one-to-one transferral: the absolute number of *asuwang* should always be decreasing, since it can be assumed that at least some will die without being able to pass on the stone. In answer to this, I was told that *asuwang* can generally survive long enough to pass on the stone, regardless of how badly injured they are.

Note the importance of passing the *asuwang*-stone on to a member of the same family. In part, this may serve to reinforce the importance that Filipinos generally place on kin as being allies, together against the world — this is the case even with *asuwang*. Of course, it also suggests that, when a suspected *asuwang* is despatched, the curse of having such a predatory creature in the neighbourhood is not obviated, and suspicion may pass from the deceased to other family members. This tendency for certain traits to be passed on or recur within a family is also found among healers: it is said that healing talents run in families. The partially hereditary nature of the *asuwang* is reminiscent of the European vampire, which in some traditions returns from the dead to feed upon close kin and friends, thus passing vampirism onto its own relatives first (Summers 1995 [1928]:1-139 *passim*; du Boulay 1982).

The second method for creating a new *asuwang* does not rely on the death of the original *asuwang*. As has been mentioned, *asuwang* love to feed on human flesh. It is possible for an *asuwang* to create another of its kind by feeding to the target person the cooked flesh of a human. However, it is not necessarily the consumption of human flesh that will transform the victim into an asuwang, but the fact that it was cooked by an *asuwang*. Over time, eating the food will gradually produce in the target a craving for human meat, until the target eventually becomes an *asuwang*. Such an *asuwang*, called a *yanggaw*, is initially very dangerous, since its cravings are stronger than its self-control: unlike the more experienced full-fledged *asuwang*, it does not yet know how to pick the times and places to attack. It will gradually become more settled, and then is referred to as an *asuwang*. I was told that

asuwang have the ability to camouflage human meat, to give it the appearance of some other sort of food — especially very choice cuts of meat or fish — in order to trick their target into anthropophagy. Should one ever be in doubt as to the true nature of the food served (especially by a stranger), one should sprinkle a little *kalamansi* juice over it. If it is not what it seems, then the juice will make it revert to its true form.[61]

Apart from their extraordinary abilities, *asuwang* are often in some way human (even though classified by informants as Third Kind), and interact in their daily lives — ignoring for the moment their propensity to feed on other humans — as people. They may have jobs, families or, as in the case of *Teñente Gimo*, be upstanding members of the community.

> Teñente [Lieutenant] Gimo was a *barangay* captain near the town of Duweñas, near Iloilo, in Panay Island. This town is now known as "the town of the *asuwang*". This occurred before the war [with the Japanese]. Teñente Gimo had one daughter, a teacher. Gimo's daughter invited a friend, a co-teacher, to stay at her father's house for the weekend. That night, they go to sleep in the same room, but the guest can't sleep very well. All through the night, she keeps waking up and waking up. Eventually, at midnight, she hears a noise outside the house, a murmur. She peeks through a gap in the wall, and sees men talking with Gimo. She sees a chopping board, boiling water and a *bolo* [a short sword, also used for butchering]. When she saw that, and because she has jewellery, a bracelet and earrings, she transferred these things to the sleeping daughter. Then she climbed to the roof and escaped. She had heard the men say that the one with the jewellery was the victim. Before escaping, she covered the daughter with a blanket, and put pillows wrapped up in a blanket where she had been lying. It's very dark.
>
> The men go into the room and touch the daughter's ear, and feel the earrings. Then they touch her wrist, and feel the bracelet, so they are sure that it is the other woman. They chop her up, and then they see her face, but she's already dead, the daughter. The other one has already escaped.
>
> So Gimo's daughter does not come to the school any more, and the other one thinks that perhaps she was chopped up. She goes to the Philippine Constabulary, and they arrest Teñente Gimo. He is made to parade around the town with a sign: I am Teñente Gimo, an *asuwang* who killed my own daughter. Don't do as I did." Then he was burnt. This is a true story.[62]

Asuwang is also a colloquial term for cannibalism. It is difficult to determine whether Teñente Gimo was believed to be a true *asuwang*, or merely a cannibal. Unlike others of the Third Kind, *asuwang* tend to be partly human and partly supernatural, so that the difference between an *asuwang* and a cannibal is not very great.[63]

Information on the *asuwang* has been provided in some detail here because it is one of the most commonly-encountered topics for discussion about the Third Kind, or for representation in the mass media. Although the *asuwang* is not encountered in Manila, it is mentioned almost as often as the *duwende*, and can be seen in comic books or in the games children play. It is the "monster" *par excellence*: the thing which lived long ago or still exists, if far away — something which is very, very dangerous.

Above: An asuwang *devouring an infant. Note the thatched roofs at the bottom of the picture. Although rural dwellings use corrugated metal for roofing, just as in the cities, their homes are always represented as being of the traditional thatched variety. To a Filipino reader, those roofs immediately place the picture in the provinces.*

Other entities include the *tikbalang*, the *kapre* and the *sigbin*.

The *tikbalang* appears in the shape of a horse (they have also been described as having the body and arms of a muscular man, but the head, hind legs and tail of a horse). Their main purpose is to guard underground treasure, until the rightful owner of that treasure appears, at which time they will guide the owner to the hoard. They can cause sickness if necessary, but only in the process of defending their charge. I was not able to discover how or why the *tikbalang* came to be guarding the treasure in the first place, or how they recognise the rightful owner.

A cigar-smoking giant, often the first thing one sees of the *kapre* is the dull glow of their cigar, high in a tree. They are sometimes attached to particular trees, especially the *balete* tree [*Ficus indica*].[54] *Kapre* have been known to harm humans, although they will not do so unless provoked, particularly if their tree is threatened.

> Blind Nonoy told me of an enormous tree in his home province, which people believe is the abode of a *Kapre*. Whenever people try to trim the tree to get lumber they fall sick because the *kapre*, angered by the attempted damage to his tree/home, retaliates. Gerardo added that, if someone tried to damage our homes, we would get angry, and the *kapre* was just the same. People now leave that tree alone.

Lastly, the *sigbin* [V]. The *sigbin* resembles a cat, either black or brown in colour, with an exceptionally long tail. It is attracted to the houses of sick people, especially those near to death, and will try to go under the house. If it does so, the sick person will surely die. I was told that, in the Visayas, when there is a serious sickness, people will stand guard around the house of the sick person, to watch for the *sigbin*. Whether the *sigbin* somehow causes the death or is merely the herald of its inevitability is unclear. The entity does not like to be seen, and so it is possible to keep the *sigbin* (and the death of the sick person) away by posting a guard.

One spirit being which is not encountered in the Philippines, but is reputed to exist elsewhere, is the *bampira*. This is the Tagalog rendering of

"vampire", also occasionally called a *drakula* (from Dracula). Vampires are not considered to exist in the Philippines, although they are a favourite stock monster of the local horror film industry. Instead, it is sometimes said that, just as the Philippines has its *asuwang*, so too do other countries have their vampires, especially the United States and Europe. I was asked on several occasions whether there were vampires in Australia, but I denied their presence there. Again, some people did not credit the existence of vampires, since they had not yet seen them. On one occasion, when I denied the existence of such entities, a newspaper report from a local tabloid was presented for my education.

Natatakot na magka-AIDS

BAMPIRA BIBILI NA LAMANG NG DUGO

Above: "Natatakot na magka-AIDS: BAMPIRA BIBILI NA LAMANG NG DUGO" *[Fearful of catching AIDS, vampires are now buying their blood]* Bulgar, *December 31, 1993. The article goes on to explain that vampires in Europe and the United States, frightened by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, have started to purchase their supplies from blood banks.*[65]

I have already mentioned spirits of the recently dead as one category of the Third Kind. In the next section I discuss funerary practices on the basis of a case study of the death and funeral of Bernardo Pingol.

Lolo Badong's Death: A Case Study

As far as anyone could ascertain, Bernardo Pingol was 93 years old when he died. Bernardo, more affectionately known as Lolo Badong (Grandfather Badong) was one of the earliest settlers in the rural and unsettled area that, by the time of my fieldwork, had become the *barangay* of Tugatog. Reputed to have been a strong and somewhat fierce man in his younger days — and a hard drinker — by 1994 (the year of his death), Lolo Badong was little more than a shadow, a thin framework of bones and skin.

Originally from Panay Island in the Visayan chain, Lolo Badong had settled in Tugatog just after the Japanese occupation. According to the stories I was told about his early life (Lolo Badong had difficulties speaking, hearing and in comprehension, thanks to his advanced age), the *barangay* was at that time largely wilderness, with a few mango plantations scattered about. It was in the hinterland near the fishing town of Malabon, now the seat of the municipality of the same name. Badong staked out an area of land next to a plantation which was later redeveloped as an elementary school.

Badong's first house, built on piles and of reclaimed timber and rusty sheet metal, still stands. It is the home of his eldest son, and is next to the house in which he spent the last years of his life. Every morning, Lolo Badong would shuffle up and down the compound, sweeping and watching his children and grandchildren.

By the time I met Lolo Badong, he was a frail old man, his tee shirt soaked in saliva from dribbling, his movements frail, jerky and slow. Perhaps, as he shuffled around the compound, never going too far from the house where he and his wife Nati lived, he remembered when the compound had been a pig enclosure, or how So-and-so's house stood on what had once been a pond with *kangkong* growing in it, or when the high, broken glass and barbed wire-surmounted walls of the elementary school had been merely a stand of mango trees.

When the 1994 rainy season came, Asogue Street suffered its first floods in living memory. The drainage around Metro Manila is poor, and the

lack of maintenance of storm drains is notorious; however, Tugatog (despite being a low-lying area) had always been free of the seasonal problems which habitually plague much of the rest of the city. This year, thanks to new building works between the compound and Manila Bay, the storm water backed up and overflowed into the residential areas.

Unlike the old houses of timber and built on piles, the newer, hollow block and concrete structures were flooded by the rising waters, which rose to a little less than a metre in the compounds just off Asogue Street. The road, being higher, was not quite so deeply flooded, but still impassable to vehicles. Houses were flooded to varying depths, but all were soaked on the lower levels.

Following the first bout of flooding (these occurred on a rough average of twice a week for three months), my neighbours had low concrete barriers built in front of their doors. Given that most of the houses were so badly made as to be highly permeable, and that residents consistently under-estimated the height the water would reach during the floods, these measures proved ineffective. And so the concrete barriers were built higher and higher.

As a consequence of the barriers, Lolo Badong could no longer leave his house. Hardly an active man, he simply did not have the strength to pull himself over the low wall (it was roughly 70cm high). Instead, he became completely housebound, and his smaller grandchildren were assigned to keep him and Nati company (although spry Nati was able to come and go at will, she tended to stay with her husband as much as possible: I rarely saw her out and about during this period).

Although it is possible that the confinement to his house may have hastened Lolo Badong's degeneration, not one of my informants ever suggested to me that this may have been the case. Still, he became progressively weaker, and one of his sons remarked to me that he (the son) was praying that his father would survive until Christmas, because if he did it would surely be the last. Lolo Badong's appetite progressively diminished, until he was sustaining himself on a few glasses of diluted fruit juice per day.

The old man did not see that last Christmas: he died on October 17, 1994, at about 8pm. During the last few days, his children and their spouse were in constant attendance by his bed: according to my notes, it was the wife of his eldest son who was with him when he died. Within a few minutes, all of his descendants who were living in the compound, as well as most of the relatives and other neighbours, had been informed and were congregated around the house. Many were crowded into the death room, others milled about in the adjoining *sala* [main living room and guest entertainment area] or leaned in through windows and doors (I was one of these).

By the time I arrived, almost all of the children — except for those too young to understand — were crying, even wailing at the death of their grandfather. The men and women were also crying; this was to be the first of a number of public displays of grief during the week leading up to the burial. To the best of my knowledge, of the adults, only three did not cry: myself, Eddie Mudfish (a neighbour and a grave digger, not given to public displays of emotion) and Nati.

At no time during the next month did I see Nati shed tears over the loss of her husband. I asked her daughter-in-law, Ofelia, whether she had ever seen the old woman cry. Ofelia told me that she knew for certain that Nati had cried on one occasion, but couldn't be sure about the whole period. The one time Nati wept was the night after the burial, the first night that she was alone in her house, the first night that Lolo Badong was not there. Soon afterwards, her daughter and son-in-law moved in to keep her company.

A couple of men went out to arrange for an undertaker to collect the body. When it had become apparent that Lolo Badong would not last through the night, they had sent for the parish priest to come and bestow Extreme Unction; however, the priest had apparently replied that it was inconvenient for him to come at that time.[66]

Unlike the priest, undertakers were much easier to arrange. Perhaps it is because of the nearness of the two municipal cemeteries — those of Malabon and Kalookan, which share a common boundary and have become

one huge, walled-in city of the dead[67] — that along the main streets leading to Sangandaan Market there are perhaps half a dozen small, one-room undertaker-cum-funeral parlours, wedged between assorted scrap metal dealers, doctors, drug stores, karaoke bars and *sari-sari* stores. The undertakers arrived before 9pm.

Although the wet season was long past by October, the compound was still subject to intermittent but mild flooding during high tides. Effectively, the floor of the compound (and of most of the other residential compounds on Asogue Street) was a mire of rank, black mud and dirty pools. It never dried out. The undertakers and some of the young men had to carry Lolo Badong's body from his house to the vehicle waiting outside in Asogue Street; those few metres were over mud, rocks and bits of rotten timber that had been scrounged up to make it easier to carry the corpse away. During the period following death and leading up to the burial — known as *lamay* — visitors had to pick their way over the rocks and through the mud to the house in order to pay their last respects. By the end of that night, most of the children had cried themselves to sleep or to a befuddled silence, and had to be carried or led home.

I saw the body the next morning, after it had been returned and laid out in the *sala*, next to the room in which the old man died. Lolo Badong now lay in state in a coffin of some light-coloured wood veneer (one of his sons told me it was the cheapest coffin in stock). The top half was raised, and under the glass was Lolo Badong. He didn't look like the old, shuffling man I remembered. Instead, there was a too-heavily made up mannequin, his cheeks and lips unnaturally coloured — I mean "unnaturally" because for the year that I knew him his skin had been quite pallid, particularly for a brown-skinned Filipino. If I had not known that it *was* he, I doubt if I would have recognised the body in the coffin as belonging to Lolo Badong.

Next to the coffin was a raised bookstand (like most of the accoutrements, it was hired from the funeral parlour) on which was an open Visitor's Book. There were several arrangements of artificial flowers. During the day, a green sheet was put up behind the coffin: his family and visitors

attached to this strips of purple cloth bearing their names and the names of their families. I was told on several occasions that this was so that people could show their respects to the dead man (although it also served to advertise to others which kin and close friends had made the effort to visit), and that purple was the colour normally used, a colour of mourning.

Strips of black cloth were attached to poles and to the schoolyard wall near the entrance to the compound. When I helped put these up, I was told that they were to let passersby know that there had been a death, so they knew to show proper respect. A table and trestles were put under a tarpaulin in the street — since very little vehicular traffic uses Asogue Street, this caused few problems.

Lamay is a period of celebration as much as of mourning. As kin and old family friends learned of Lolo Badong's death, they came to visit. Visits occurred at all hours of the day and night, so that there was a steady stream of people arriving in the muddy compound from about mid-morning until early evening. Many visitors did not leave until quite late at night. The code of hospitality demands that these guests be fed and properly entertained (which, for the men, means being plied with alcohol). This was such an important event that beer, rather than the cheaper gin, was always available, while feasts were prepared almost every evening for the three to four nights of *lamay*. The costs of the feasting and entertaining were largely covered by Lolo Badong's insurance,[68] although a certain proportion of the costs were absorbed by his relatives.

Lamay: Accompanying the Dead

Lamay normally lasts from two or three days to a week: among other things, it is a period for friends and relatives of the deceased to come and pay their respects. Since some may have to travel great distances, the period of *lamay* must be long enough to give them a chance to attend. As with all social events, *lamay* is not purely a period for the living to pay their respects to the dead: it is also a time for the living to be seen by the living. By this, I mean that visitors come to re-affirm kinship or friendship links with the immediate family of the deceased or to patch up social relationships which

have either become moribund or unfriendly. Disputes may be settled amicably, on the basis that "the old man would have wanted it so", a convenient excuse that allows both parties in the dispute to appear to be peacemakers and dutiful; respectful of the dead.

One dispute was not settled during this *lamay*:

> One of Lolo Badong's sons, Tonio, travelled from Panay Island, a trip of three days by ferry, in order to pay his respects to his father. Whether or not he would actually come was a matter of great concern to the whole compound: he was one of the two of Lolo Badong's children who did not live nearby (one of the two daughters lives in Canada, and she also came for the mourning period). Tonio was believed to be mentally unsound. According to the stories, he had gone mad because of an unrequited love affair and refused to have friendly relations with any of his siblings. I had earlier travelled to Panay with Tonio's eldest brother, but Tonio refused to speak with the man. When he finally did arrive in Asogue Street, he went to the body and then spoke only with his mother. He refused to even acknowledge the presence of his siblings. Tonio stayed only a few hours before leaving Asogue Street to catch a ferry back to Panay. Everyone who talked to me about it said they were greatly saddened by Tonio's behaviour, because they had been willing to attempt a reconciliation with the man, especially as this was *lamay*, when disputes within the family should be settled for the sake of the memory of Lolo Badong. However, he had not given them any opportunity to do so.

Although *lamay* normally lasts for several days to a week, it may be much longer for heads of state or other well-known personalities. By the same token, for the poorest people, *lamay* can be exceptionally short. For them, the most important question in the length of the mourning period is the time it takes to raise the money to pay for the plot, the coffin, and other accessories.

Thanks to Lolo Badong's insurance, this question of money was of merely secondary importance (although it was a restraining factor to a certain degree). However, for the poorest residents of Asogue Street and the nearby rabbit warren of squatters' shanties, it is the crucial problem. For them, the money is usually raised by sponsoring games of chance, especially *sakla*, which is the gambling activity customarily associated with

lamay (other games are also played).[69] Professional *sakla* players — sharks — set up their tables near the mourning place (this is generally in the street beside a public "*lamay* chapel" nearby; however, for Lolo Badong it was held in Asogue Street under a tarpaulin, next to the family compound. They pay to the family of the deceased a certain proportion of their takings, or *tong* (rent). This money will be used to pay for the costs of the funeral but, since the deceased's family must also provide gifts of food and alcohol to the *sakla* players, as well as guests who come to pay their respects, it may take some time to accumulate the necessary cash. I was told that sometimes it turned out that the costs of attempting to raise money for the funeral were greater than the profits. In such cases, the family of the deceased had to borrow money, often from *bombays*.[70]

Although playing *sakla* publicly is technically illegal, the police tend to turn a blind eye when it is conducted as part of *lamay*.

Every night until late, people gamble, drink, sing, dance and eat — there was virtually no time when Lolo Badong's body was left unattended. Children were allowed to stay up far later than usual and join in the party games held beside Lolo Badong's coffin after all the visitors had left. These were always played for fun and never for money, games so simple that anyone but the very youngest children could join in. In all of the games, if one made three mistakes, then the penalty was song, dance or poem: the loser had to sing, recite a poem or dance, depending on the penalty ascribed by the popular acclaim of the other players.

Several times during the games people would turn to me and, laughing, say, "You see how it is in the Philippines? This is how it should be at these times, everyone laughing and happy." It was very important for the family and friends of Lolo Badong to be happy and noisy during the hours they spent beside his coffin.

Although no one suggested it to me at the time, there is another possible reason as to why Lolo Badong's family were so conscientious in ensuring that his corpse was never left alone during *lamay*. Before a body is

safely buried, it is — according to the old stories — in danger of being attacked by necrophagic ghouls (Ramos 1971a:62-68)

No one ever mentioned ghouls as a form of the Third Kind to me, nor did I ever suspect the existence of such an entity in Philippine folklore until after I returned from fieldwork. Thus, I have no way of ascertaining to what extent people were aware of such an entity, or whether this figured as a major reason for staying near Lolo Badong, of surrounding him with light and noise and laughter. I suspect that, while people were aware that custom demanded company — and noisy company, at that — for the corpse while it lay in state, they did not necessarily know what underpinned the custom.

The Funeral and Burial of Lolo Badong

Lolo Badong was buried in the middle of the afternoon. Shortly before the funeral service was to be held at the nearby parish church, the undertaker's hearse arrived in Asogue Street. By this time, the family had washed and dressed in their best clothes, the children were scrubbed and liberally sprinkled with talcum powder (as was always done when children were taken to any formal gathering). The hearse drove slowly down Asogue Street, and made its way to the church, a circuitous journey rendered longer by the need to take back streets to avoid road works and difficult traffic. The hearse was followed by the family, friends and many of the neighbours of Lolo Badong. I saw a number of funeral processions in the Philippines, and this was the second in which I took part. Always the hearse followed by family and friends, with a variety of ballads (in English and Tagalog) played loudly from a stereo mounted in the vehicle.

With three funeral services being held simultaneously, the church was crowded. I was told that this was not an unusual situation because of the large number of people serviced by a single parish church. Indeed, weddings, funerals and masses that I attended were always crowded: the Christmas Midnight Mass was held four times from early evening to midnight, and each service was filled to overflowing.

After the funeral service, the three parties of mourners followed their respective hearses to the Malabon municipal cemetery. Philippine

cemeteries follow a particular pattern — at least, the half-dozen or so that I saw all followed this pattern — in that the deceased are not buried in the ground, but rather are piled atop their kin in hollow block and concrete "mini-tombs", each constructed to house one coffin, and built just prior to the burial. Over the course of several decades, the sarcophagi have piled up, one upon another, so that the cemeteries resemble nothing so much as an assortment of concrete towers of varying shapes and sizes and alignments, some of the towers taller than a man. Unlike Australian cemeteries, where there is a strong sense of horizontal space, of plots stretching out in all directions, in the Philippines the overwhelming feeling is of verticality, of up-down lines crowding in upon one another. I was told that such above-ground arrangements were more "modern" and "progressive",[71] although no one was able to explain to me exactly *how* they were progressive.

Each of the tombs has a headstone affixed to the narrow end, stating the identity and dates of birth and death of the person within. The combined Malabon-Kalookan cemetery, like all the cemeteries I saw there, was surrounded by a high stone wall, although in some places the wall was composed of tombs jammed one upon another and against each other. These formed lines of nameplates broken occasionally by small cracks, a few large enough for an adult to squeeze through. The wall in such places reminded me of enormous concrete filing cabinets.

Scattered among the tomb-towers are other buildings which, while all architecturally different to each other, are all large and characteristically different to the sarcophagi. These are the family crypts of the wealthy, identified to me as being generally Chinese-Filipino families. They are built of marble or stone, and may contain tinted glass. Some have gardens (perhaps real, perhaps plastic), or high fences of wrought iron surmounted by spikes. Some are rumoured to be air-conditioned. Informants told me that it was the Chinese custom to build such houses as a place for their dead to reside in comfort, even if the living members of the family did not have such luxury. Further to the south, near Old Manila, is the Chinese Cemetery, which contains large numbers of such houses for the pampered dead.

After slowly making our way through the cemetery internal roads, the cortege reached the closest point to the Pingol family plot which could be reached by vehicle. The coffin was unloaded and carried over a low iron fence to a relatively open space beneath two acacia trees. There, the coffin was opened one last time. At that moment, a sobbing moan went up from one of the mourners. Like a wave, it spread outwards from its centre near the coffin, until almost all those assembled were sobbing, crying or wailing. After a time the tears subsided, although they did not completely end.

Following the partial lull in the group display of grief, some of the men motioned to the children that they were to come closer to the coffin. As they did, the men picked them up and passed them over the top of the coffin. I was told later that the spirits of the recently-dead sometimes visit their kin in dreams. Although the dead are not considered to have any malicious intent in making these visits — perhaps they are merely lonely — the visitations can be frightening, especially to children. After all, fear is a common characteristic of encounters with the Third Kind. Passing the children over the coffin, I was told, ensured that Lolo Badong would not visit them in dreams.

Some families, including neighbours, dressed their children in red clothes on the day of the funeral, three days after the funeral, and on the seventh day. Since spirits are believed to be frightened of that particular colour, this was meant as a precaution to keep Lolo Badong from approaching them. Again, the children's parents did not suspect that Lolo Badong might wish to hurt his grandchildren, but his presence could unnecessarily frighten them, hence the precaution.

The coffin was then hauled between and around a series of tombs until it reached the family plot. There, at about chest height, was a newly-finished sarcophagus, built by Eddie Mudfish. The coffin was slid into the cavity and, as the wails of the mourners reached a new crescendo, Eddie sealed off the side of the tomb. Afterwards, a few candles were lit and then the mourners made their way back to Asogue Street.

For nine days after the funeral, prayer sessions were held each evening in Lolo Badong's house. The prayers were conducted in Ilonggo, Badong's native tongue. After the ninth day, the next prayer session was held forty days after the funeral, and the last was to be held one year after.

Postscript: Araw ng Patay

Lolo Badong's funeral was held shortly before November 1, *Araw ng Patay* [Day of the Dead], also known by the Spanish term *Todos los Santos.*[72] It is on the evening of this day that Filipinos customarily gather to remember the dead, especially those who have died within the last year. That Lolo Badong had died only a little over a week before lent an added poignancy to the day.

The All Saints' observances properly consist of a vigil conducted by family members at the grave or tomb of the deceased. This vigil begins at around nightfall, or perhaps a little later, and is supposed to last until dawn. It is not necessary for individuals to stay the whole time; rather, the vigil is usually conducted in shifts. This was the pattern I observed in Manila: the previous year, I had seen a similar vigil held in the agricultural province of Pangasinan. In this case, the vigil began in the morning and lasted until late afternoon, when it was broken up by the onset of a typhoon. At the time, I was told that the observance would not have lasted much longer, even if the typhoon had not threatened — in the provinces, the *Araw ng Patay* observances are usually conducted during the day.

The Malabon-Kalookan cemetery was a blaze of light that night. Throughout the grounds were plastic flowers, candles, crowds, braziers cooking, men drinking. People sat and chatted, or made their way through the crowds to visit with neighbours or relatives in other parts of the cemetery. There was remembrance, friendship and flared tempers. Nearby a fight broke out, three men against one. Other men converged from all directions to pull the combatants apart.

I do not know if anyone stayed the entire night with Lolo Badong; most people departed shortly after midnight.

Outside the open door of Lolo Badong's house were two lit candles. The next day, I was told that the candles were there to help light Badong's

way. November 1 is the time when the spirits of the dead are abroad, and they often wish to visit the homes they once lived in. So the candles were there to show Badong that he was welcome to come inside for a while and see that everything was in order.

***

The death and burial of Lolo Badong serves to highlight many of the customs, traditions and attitudes which pertained to the Third Kind in Asogue Street. While the world was richly inhabited with a variety of entities, each with particular attributes, haunts and interests, they were of only passing interest to most of my informants, in that the Third Kind interacted with humans only fairly rarely, while the problems of survival were daily, pressing and therefore of much greater immediate interest.

Of more importance to most people was sickness, particularly if it affected children or was debilitating. Certain sicknesses were caused by the spirits, while others had their own particular sources. It is sickness — how one becomes ill, and the nature and characteristics of illnesses — which is considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: *Maysakit! Aray!*[73]

To my neighbours, the world was full of activities, agents and circumstances which could cause sickness, and these illnesses varied by nature, severity and course of treatment, often depending on the manner in which they were contracted. Many were common enough to be an almost daily concern, while other sicknesses — especially the most severe ones — were so rare as to be almost unheard of; either virtually myths, or a serious emergency if they did occur.

Throughout this chapter, I shall use the term "sickness" or "illness" to refer to any physical, mental or emotional state of "unwellness", that is, an unusual departure from normal health or strength. The word "unusual" here is important: anything "unusual" in the nature of the sickness would normally be identified as such by my neighbours. Degenerative effects due to age might not be identified as "sickness" because they are not unusual for the person suffering them, or because their incidence can be explained as being an effect of age.

Thus, "sickness" or "illness" are not defined with regards to apparent cause: under this definition, sorcery and viruses both cause sickness, although the mechanisms, signs, symptoms and severities involved may be quite varied. By contrast, an "injury" is any form of physical damage to a body that usually — but not necessarily — occurs as a result of an accident. It should be obvious that sprains, cuts and abrasions are injuries. Tagalog does not linguistically distinguish between "illness" and "pain": the root word for both is *sakit*, from which is derived *maysakit*, "being sick/in pain".

The Tagalog root word for "health" is *lusog*. Thus, *kalusugan* for "health" and *malusog* for the adjective "healthy". The terms for "strength" (*lakas*/*malakas*) were occasionally used as substitutes for "health", seemingly with the same meaning intended.

Although I have defined sickness as being an absence of health, with health as the given — and this was how people usually seemed to consider

it — my informants often spoke of the characteristics of "health" as something to be achieved or maintained, rather than merely something that one had when one was not sick (as my definition of sickness might suggest).

A healthy individual is one who is strong [*lakas*] and has a good layer of body fat [*taba*], since hunger, lack of food, is a constant spectre in the lives of the Filipino poor. To have a good layer of body fat is to be healthy, prosperous and powerful. Thus the term *dagul* [big man], which has both the connotations of physical bigness and power or social weight. It can also refer to laziness, a dead weight. I rarely met senior officials or police officers who could not be described as "big men" (in both senses of the term), and I believe that the positive connotations of health, power and strength contained within the term *dagul* had as much to do with this as did the indolence to which public officials were suspected of being prey.

Being sick is also partly defining oneself as such, and having other people agree to that self-definition (or, conversely, assenting to others' designation of oneself as sick). This is not to deny that sickness is an interior state, whether this is based on organic dysfunctions or not, but that it is also a social event as well as culturally informed (Helman 1990:86-93).

There seems to be four broad classes of illness, the classes based not on the illnesses themselves, but on the ways in which they were caused. These are: illnesses caused through an imbalance of hot and cold elements in the body (what I call "natural illnesses"); those caused by elements identifiable to Western medicine (either through the actions of microscopic organisms or poor nutrition/hygiene); those caused by the Third Kind; and those caused by sorcery [*kulam*] and witchcraft [*usog*]. This chapter will explore each of these broad categories of causative agent in turn.

In general, the model of classes of illness which I present here are my own, based on *post hoc* analysis of the data I collected while in the field. Although these models were not articulated by informants, and so do not represent an exegesis of Filipino understandings of the conceptual structure of sickness types, I presented a preliminary version of this model to some informants: they said that it was an accurate reflection of their understanding

of the workings of illnesses, albeit one they themselves had not articulated. But then, it is perhaps unsurprising that I was able to draw up a model where they had not: I spent much of my time thinking about these things, while most of my informants were far too busy making a living, cooking meals, raising children.

The Hot/Cold Opposition, Post-Parturition Complications and Other Complaints

A variety of maladies are encountered by Asogue Street residents on an almost daily basis or as seasonally recurrent outbreaks which are expected under specific climatic conditions or at particular times of the year. They are, therefore, in their appointed place within the tempo of the annual round. Most of these ailments are little more than nuisances to the sufferer: hot or cold imbalances, "red eye" or *bungang araw*. Only the prohibitions surrounding the post-parturition period and possible ill-effects of transgressing those prohibitions are generally thought to have real health risks attached to them. These risks and prohibitions generally pertain to the mother, rather than the infant. However, even the behavioural rules attached to a new mother's activities are a routine matter — as long as the rules are not broken, the risk to mother or child is reckoned to be remote.

Natural Illnesses

Those illnesses which have no initiating agency — an agent such as bacteria or spirits — I describe as "natural" illnesses. These illnesses are "natural" because they can occur without the need to invoke an additional entity which can in some way act with purpose. Hot and cold exist in the world, either as physical elements — hot sun, cold wind — or as more "metaphysical" elements — such as the heat or inherent coolness of particular foods. In the latter case, the heat or coolness is perceived to be experientially there, even if I personally did not recognise it as such: people regularly told me that eating specific foods made them feel "hot" or "cold" inside, no matter what the physical temperature of the food. They could feel the *metaphysical*

temperature of the food; it was something that they had been socialised to experience, whereas I, culturally blind, could not.

So, as far as my informants were concerned, the heat or cold was really there, in the wind or the food. By contrast, many sicknesses were caused by agents, rather than the elements. Whether these sicknesses resulted from the actions of the Third Kind, sorcery or microorganisms is not germane here: such sicknesses required the action of invisible or hidden agents, whose existence was often only suspected or taken on faith (neither *duwende* nor viruses can ordinarily be seen, one either believes they are causing a sickness, or one does not). On the other hand, heat and coolness could be directly experienced.

Since similar sicknesses could have a variety of different causes, it is not so much the illness itself which is referred to here as "natural", but the causal factor involved in its production. For instance, fever can occur for a variety of reasons, and the treatment may or may not vary depending on its cause; however, if it has been caused by an imbalance of hot and cold, then the causal agent is "natural".

Whereas the anthropologist is interested in delineating a series of conceptual categories for the causes of the illnesses encountered during fieldwork, such a framework is arguably of secondary moment to most residents of Asogue Street. To them, what is of far greater importance is the effect that sickness is likely to have: its severity and mode of treatment. Is it life-threatening? Is it debilitating? Can I continue to work (if I have a job)? How is it treated? Can I ignore it? Do I have to go to a healer? To a doctor? To the hospital? If they themselves were sick, they tended to struggle on as best they could, especially if they suspected that the illness would require extensive or prolonged treatment; however, if one of their children was involved, they would go to any lengths to ensure speedy treatment and recovery.

To the residents of Asogue Street, "natural" sicknesses were not usually a source of great anxiety, and hence of lesser importance than other classes of illness. While they were perhaps the most prevalent, they were

neither dangerous nor of particularly long duration. Further, treatment was cheap and easily available. If an illness could not be cured with a home remedy, then people tended to take the line of least resistance: they visited a healer or bought a handful of broad-spectrum antibiotics. If, after a half-dozen capsules had been ingested the symptoms abated, then all was well and good and no further action need be taken.

It was only with great reluctance that people would go to a doctor or visit a hospital: these were very expensive, and usually only undertaken when all other possibilities had been exhausted, or the sickness was recognised as being only treatable by doctors. In this case, all other avenues were automatically excluded.

Essentially, the more anxiety a sickness caused, the more important it was to informants (even if it was comparatively rare). Illnesses which were easy and/or inexpensive to treat were not sources of anxiety, while those which would require lengthy treatment by a doctor or in a hospital were major causes of anxiety. Few informants could possibly have afforded such treatments, since there is no public health system in the Philippines. I was often told by people that they prayed to God that they, or their families, would not become sick.

Running Hot and Cold

In common with much of Southeast and mainland Asia, concepts of folk health in the Philippines subscribe to a view that health within a human body is characterised by a balance of "hot" and "cold" elements. In the Philippines, good health is perceived as flowing from a slight imbalance towards heat. A body was best slightly warm, rather than tepid. According to Jocano (1973:49-54,81; see also Tan 1987:51-72), health is an endeavour to maintain a relatively constant inner and outer environment, insofar as health is a question of a balance between hot and cold, not just within the body, but also in relation to its external environment.[74]

In order to maintain one's health, it is necessary to consume a combination of foods that possess hot or cold elements so that these elements are as close to being balanced within the body as possible. Almost

all things which could be consumed were classified as being hot, cold or neutral by informants; however, there were only a few foods which everyone identified as being unambiguously hot or cold. Many were in a grey area, and individuals differed on whether these foods should be classed as hot, cold or neither.

The highly-prized and rare meats — dog and goat — were always considered the hottest of foods. Informants told me that such meats gave you a good, warm feeling in the stomach. Due to their expense, such foods were only eaten on special occasions, such as at Christmas. Most spices (also quite expensive) — chilli, garlic, ginger — were classed as hot foods. It is important to realise that Tagalog distinguishes between "hot", or *mainit*, and "spicy hot" or *maanghang*. The former term can refer to either the inherent heat of the food, or the temperature at which it is served (these have no relationship to each other), while the latter term *only* refers to the "burning" quality of spices such as chilli or, to a lesser degree, ginger. Finally, *alak* (alcoholic beverages) were also considered hot.

Vegetables and shellfish were considered the coldest of foods. I was told on several occasions that it was unwise to eat such foods at night (especially if there were no hot foods to counteract their coldness): this could cause stomach cramps. When a large amount of shellfish became available at a drinking-party, I questioned the wisdom of eating them, and was told that, as we were all young men and healthy, our bodies would be able to absorb the cold on this occasion.[75]

The following table summaries the heat or cold of some of the more common foods.

Foodstuff	Hot	Neutral	Cold
Dog	x		
Goat	x		
Chicken[1]		?	
Fish		x	
Pork	(x)	(x)	
Duck		x	
Beef		?	
Liver (any)		?	
Squid/Cuttlefish		(x)	(x)
Shellfish (Mussels)			x
Crab	(x)	(x)	
Alcohol	x		
Coffee	x		
Milk		x	
Chilli	x		
Ginger	x		
Garlic	x		
Salt		x	
Onions	x		
Pepper	x		
Vegetables			x
Fruit			x
Eggs	(x)	(x)	
Balut[2]	x		x
Noodles	x		
Coconut Oil	x		
Vinegar			x
Water		x	
Rice		x	
Medicine[3]			
Human flesh[4]	x		

[1] Where a foodstuff is marked **(x)**, responses were more-or-less evenly mixed between **hot**, **neutral** and **cold**. A question mark, "**?**" indicates that respondents did not know.

[2] Steamed, ready-to-hatch duck eggs (there is no English term). A favourite delicacy, said to be beneficial for one's knees.

[3] Medicines varied depending on the nature of the illness being treated, although Jocano (1973:54) claims that in Laguna, southern Luzon, Western medicines are considered, by definition, to be hot. My findings were that if the illness was considered to be caused by an excess of cold, then any effective medicine, *ipso facto*, had to be hot (and *vice-versa*). Thus, the heat of a particular pharmaceutical depended on the heat of the illness, rather than any inherent characteristics. Defining pharmaceuticals as hot or cold based on the illness for which they are prescribed has been found elsewhere (see, for instance, Hardon 1991:6-7).

[4] Suggested as a theoretical foodstuff.

The elderly and children were considered to be more vulnerable to imbalances of hot and cold in their diets. However, I never heard of any distinction drawn on the basis of gender. Apart from the partial exception of women who had recently given birth, women were not considered to be any more vulnerable to imbalances of hot and cold than men, nor did they have inherently "hotter" or "colder" bodies.

While eating too much cold food could lead to sickness, especially stomach cramps, there did not seem to be a corollary for over-eating hot foods. Most of the hottest foods were either rare and expensive, or available only in small quantities (apart from alcohol), so it was unlikely that anyone could over-indulge in them.[76] There may be sicknesses attributable to too much heat in one's food; however, I am unaware of them. Of course, it was always possible to drink too much alcohol (which was what men usually did with liquor), although hangovers were not attributed to the heat inherent in alcohol. It seemed much easier to suffer from an excess of cold foods (which were generally cheaper and less highly-prized): in such cases, a complete or partial remedy could be obtained by consuming hot foods.

Filipinos also distinguish between food from animals "in the field" and "in the house". Although the terms used suggest that the distinction originated in the provinces, it was also applied in Asogue Street. Any animals which were found in the immediate environment could not be eaten, while those which came from some distance away (although possibly still within Manila) were "field animals" and so could be consumed. Informants told me that, if a rat were caught around the house, it should be killed and thrown away, but if it were caught in the fields, it could be served with rice. By the same token, a pet dog would not be eaten, but someone else's pet, from a distant part of Manila, could be bought or stolen and eaten (especially after it had been fattened on rice, which apparently gave it a better taste). Of all edible animals, it was only those which were near ("in the house") which could not be eaten, while those which lived at a distance ("in the field") could be eaten. This distance is relative, in that my dog is theoretically not eatable by me, but I could sell it to someone who lived far away, and to them it would

be an animal from the field. Keeping a dog near the house while it is being fattened does not transform it into an animal of the house; nor can a cow, pig or chicken ever be anything but a field animal, as I discovered in the provinces. Thus, dogs and rats occupy an indeterminate position, as do frogs; however, I am unsure exactly as to why.

Cats were not eaten because the meat was considered to be far too cold, almost too cold for human consumption. Additionally, it is commonly said that it is bad luck to kill a cat, so no one will kill any of the hordes of strays which roam the area. Likewise, bats are never eaten, although no one could give me any reason as to why not.

Hot/cold imbalances can lead to a variety of ailments. Over-eating cold foods, especially at night, was cited as a direct cause of stomach cramps, especially among the elderly. However, sicknesses can also be caused by unprotected exposure to the natural elements, whether that is the hot sun, cold wind, or changeable weather conditions. Exposure to the elements does not generally lead directly to sickness; rather, the resulting imbalance causes the sickness, or lowers the body's resistance to a variety of ailments. *Ubo* (cough), *sipon* (head cold), *trangkaso* (flu) or *lagnat* (simple fever) are said to be often indirectly caused by overexposure to the elements or to changeable weather conditions. It is recognised that these ailments may also have other causes.

One sickness *is* directly caused by exposure to an imbalance of hot and cold elements in the environment. *Pasma*, or "chill", is caused by coming into contact with cold air or water immediately after working in the heat, or whenever someone is actively perspiring. In this case, one's "pores are still open" (as informants described it) from perspiration and a sudden entry of cold elements through the pores will cause a hot/cold imbalance, leading to *pasma*. Normally, hot/cold imbalances are systemic, affecting the whole body, rather than occurring in a localised area (eating cold foods is a partial exception: the resulting pain may be felt only in the stomach).

I was occasionally told that people were suffering from colds because of the season or the month, that it brought with it changeable weather, and

this led to head colds or other upper respiratory tract infections. And I would dutifully write this down. Going back over my notes, I've noticed that I was told this almost every month that I was there: I suspect that the prevalence of such illnesses probably had more to do with the high levels of airborne pollution in Manila.

Treatment of illnesses caused by hot/cold imbalances is generally simple: fluids, rest if possible, ingestion of *kalamansi* juice. Of course, it is also important to redress the imbalance of hot and cold within the body. Usually, this meant a greater-than-normal intake of hot foods. A cure for fever is to drink beer in the evening, and it was not an uncommon sight to see some men at drinking parties take their gin mixed with a little *kalamansi* juice — the heat of the alcohol and the vitamin C in the citrus juice, between them, were believed to help fight off head colds. It is not uncommon to see "mixed paradigms" used in preventing or treating sickness: in this case, people used both hot foods and Western medicine-promoted vitamin C in order to fight off colds.

Over-the-counter cough and cold medications are often taken for head colds or influenza, or herbs can be acquired from the garden in the local elementary school (these are available for free). Although the herbal remedies are freely available and often very effective (I used them several times), it is uncommon for most people to take them. Rather, people are more willing to buy the more expensive medicines (many of which are available from *sari-sari* stores). I suspect that people preferred to use expensive medicines rather than free (and effective) herbal remedies because either they were not necessarily aware of what was available in their own street, or were not convinced that it could rival prepackaged pharmaceuticals in potency. The larger pharmaceutical companies were there, every day, the virtues of their products constantly extolled on the radio and television, while the school herbal garden (every school is required to have one) was publicised only by word of mouth.

Post-Parturition Restrictions

Sometimes, especially in the cooler times of the year, women can be seen leaving their houses at night wearing a towel draped across their head and shoulders. If an observer then asks why that person is wearing a towel, they will most likely be told that the woman recently gave birth. The towel is to protect her from an untoward influx of cold air or the touch of cool evening dew: birthing is such a stressful process that, for about a year afterwards, women are highly susceptible to changes in temperature.[77]

Failure to take adequate care of oneself, to avoid rapid changes of hot and cold, could lead to what my informants called a "relapse" [E]. A relapse consists of severe headaches, chills, shakes and fever. An *albularyo* (herbalist) can cure relapses, but of course it is better to avoid them in the first place.

The period following childbirth is dangerous for women: their bodies are susceptible to rapid changes in the temperature of their environment, and the effects of hot/cold imbalances can be quite severe. Although the danger period can last up to a year, prohibitions on women's activities following childbirth are usually strictly observed for only the first ten days to a month after the event. During that time, women may not take part in any activity which requires any part of their body to come into contact with excessive cold: thus they may not wash laundry or bathe for the first ten days, and they should be especially careful of eating cold foods at night. Additionally, to speed healing of the perineum, they may regularly squat over the smoke of burning guava leaves.[78]

Traditionally, the post-parturition restrictions were also observed during menstruation. However, it was rare for Asogue Street women to adhere to the restrictions at such times.

Apart from problems which may arise during the period immediately following birth, pregnancy itself could also be a source of danger, especially to the unborn infant. It was said that a pregnant woman who indulged overmuch in foods for which they craved, especially shellfish and crustacea, risked causing deformities in their child. Such children would be born with

deformed arms or head, vaguely reminiscent of a crab's carapace and claws. No one I knew had personal experience of this occurrence, and few people lent it much credence. However, these were occasionally reported on the television news, with the folk interpretation presented alongside a Western medical professional's opinion (usually they said the deformities were caused by pollution or pharmaceuticals), and so were often a topic of conversation.

Other Minor Complaints

There remains a number of afflictions which are natural sicknesses, in that they are not caused by agents acting upon the body. Although caused by (often quite random) events in the physical world, they are not necessarily the result of an imbalance of hot and cold.

The first of these illnesses is *tigdas hangin*, an itchy rash similar to measles, which is most prevalent during the onset of the hot, dry season, about April. It was suggested to me that, although the rash is seasonal and "comes from the air", it may be partly caused, or at least exacerbated, by airborne pollution in Manila. It is cured by rest and ingestion of plenty of fluids.

What I suspect was conjunctivitis, commonly known in Asogue Street as "red eye" or "pink eye", was another of the seasonal ailments. Although it usually affected children, sometimes adults contracted it. Since red is indicative of heat, the usual treatment involved regular applications of white fluids to cool it (another example of a "natural" illness). The juice of the small, white *sampaguita* flower was sometimes used, but the favoured treatment was human breast milk: nursing mothers were in great demand during outbreaks of red eye. Cranky, red-eyed individuals were also the butt of much humour while they were afflicted, and people would often point and make jokes about the ill-humour of sufferers. They did look pretty funny, although I didn't see the joke when I was infected.

Although red eye was not thought to be caused by an imbalance of hot and cold — instead, it was a seasonal complaint expected at certain times of the year — the remedy used was based on the hot/cold opposition.

Since redness is associated with heat, and the sufferer's eyes felt hot, sore and itchy, the obvious solution was to balance the heat by the addition of cold elements. *Why* it should be breast milk and *sampaguita* that were used is uncertain, but I suspect that their perceived effectiveness was based on tradition, itself based on trial-and-error.

Bungang araw, prickly heat, is caused by blockage of the pores due to too-heavy perspiration. Several informants said that the best treatment was to take a shower in the rain. Apparently, rain water is effective in clearing up *bungang araw*, although my informants were unsure as to why it should be falling rain, and no other sort of water, that was effective.[79] Additionally, shellfish should not be eaten when suffering from *bungang araw*: shellfish, like the skin complaint, are itchy. To eat shellfish, then, would only exacerbate the affliction.

A further type of common illness, mostly (but not exclusively) affecting children, is *pilay*. *Pilay* can be glossed in English as a sprain, but may include dislocations, greenstick fractures or bruising. It is generally caused by falls when playing or by lifting heavy weights, and is usually accompanied by mild fever. *Pilay* is almost always treated by an indigenous healer.

Ofelia does not put great stock in diagnoses of *pilay*:

> Once, when Ken-Ken [her youngest daughter, four years old] was ill and the *hilot* [healer] said it was *pilay*. She was massaged and treated, but it got worse — in the end, she had to go to the hospital. So when my children are sick now, I take them to hospital or to the [municipal] clinic; I don't believe in the *pilay*.

Another common sickness, and one which almost exclusively affects adults, is "high blood". This is essentially high blood *pressure*: it is diagnosed by a doctor and is caused by salt, stress, hot foods and alcohol, which sufferers should avoid.

> Following a dispute with one of her neighbours, Eden collapsed. Eden, who suffers from high blood and possibly heart trouble, has been very unwell since then. Her speech is slow, slurred and unclear. She had been told to go and see a doctor, but her family is so deeply in debt that she couldn't

> afford it. Although she said she has gone to see one, this is doubtful. To try and cheer her up, we [the anthropologist and her neighbours] have been teasing her about her inability to speak properly, saying how much more peaceful it is now that our inveterate gossip has been struck dumb.

Additionally, some people told me that high blood could be exacerbated by eating hot foods. Since many foods known to be hot were included by doctors in the set banned by those suffering high blood, the list was extended to include other hot foods. Others were considered to be hot because they had been banned by doctors.

The converse of high blood is "low blood", which is treated by increased intake of the foods from which high blood sufferers abstain.

Illnesses are considered to be more prevalent during changes of season or at times when the weather is variable: resistance is considered to be lower at these times. Lastly, August is known as the month of sickness, a time when airborne maladies are rife, perhaps because changeable weather is expected at this time.

"Western Illnesses": *Mikrobia* and Public Health

Illnesses which can be classed as "Western" basically fall into two categories: those which are treated by the intervention of doctors, hospitals and/or prescription pharmaceuticals; and those which are preventable by public health programs. Often, these are the same illnesses (as in the case of cholera). These illnesses are classed together because they are uniformly serious, in terms of perceived health risks and perceived cost of treatment, but also because Asogue Street residents consider them to be caused and, in some circumstances, spread by micro-organisms.

Of Doctors and Hospitals

Perhaps the most feared illnesses, those which cause the greatest anxiety, are those which require Western medicine for treatment. Although the term "Western medicine" might be considered problematic, in practical terms it is not. People are fully aware of the differences between indigenous healers

and doctors trained in the traditions of Europe and North America. The panoply of "medicine", with its doctors, pharmaceuticals, hospitals, referrals, technologies and high-tech gadgetry are something apart from the usual techniques employed by Filipino urban poor; however, they are recognised as forming a discrete set of attitudes, approaches and beliefs with regards to sickness and healing. The term "Western", just like the term "natural", is my own.

The term "Western" should not be taken to imply an opposition between two broad models of treatment, the second, one can assume, being "indigenous". Rather, it is actually one of a number of categories of curative and preventive types which Asogue Street residents may draw upon.

Filipinos have an ambivalent attitude towards Western medical techniques: it is widely seen as being highly effective in the treatment of certain sorts of ailment (in many cases, more effective than indigenous techniques); yet, at the same time, it is considered to be untrustworthy.

According to my informants, certain illnesses are caused by microorganisms, *mikrobia*, which invade the body. These illnesses are normally known by modified English or Spanish names, and include some of the more fearsome diseases known in the Philippines. Illnesses cause by microorganisms includes typhoid [*tipus*], tuberculosis [*tb*], cholera [*kolera*], HIV/AIDS and leprosy [*ketong*], as well as less drastic sicknesses, such as minor infections [*impeksyon*], ingrown toenails or chicken pox. The minor illnesses are treatable through antibiotics, which can be purchased at pharmacies or *sari-sari* stores. Ordinarily, people buy only a few doses at a time (for a cut, they may buy only one, as a precaution), due to the prohibitive prices of medicine. If the symptoms clear up while the medicines are being taken, then well and good. If not, then a few more doses will be purchased.

Other, more serious illnesses generally required a trip to the doctor or the hospital, an expensive proposition. Expensive, in that even a single consultation costs about P75, while a basic broad-spectrum antibiotic (such as amoxycillin) costs between P5 and P6 per tablet. For the purposes of

comparison, a daily income of P100 is considered by residents to be not enough to feed, clothe and educate a family of four. No informant could afford a consultation and a full course of even a cheap antibiotic. Hospitalisation is a luxury for the rich or those lucky few who have jobs and whose employers have taken out health insurance for their employees. One person told me that foreign aid agencies would be of more help to people if they subsidised medicines so that the poor could afford them.

The serious illnesses are caused by *mikrobia*, and it is Western medicine which is most effective at treating them. Sometimes, relief can be obtained by home remedies or visiting an indigenous healer. However, in such cases the person was lucky: it is unusual for someone to get off so lightly when threatened with a serious sickness (of course, these sicknesses are extremely rare, more feared than found in Asogue Street). Conversely, Western medicine is incapable of treating sicknesses caused by sorcery or the Third Kind; indeed, many people told me that it was worse than useless to visit a doctor for such sicknesses, since doctors refused to admit of the possibility of such things existing, let alone treating them. As they said, if you go to a doctor to be treated for such things, they probably won't be able to find anything wrong with you, even though you're sick. Additionally, attempting to treat such illnesses with Western medicine could make matters worse.

Given the high cost of treatment (compared with home remedies or indigenous healers), many people put off visiting a doctor when they suspect that they have an illness best treated in the general practitioner's surgery. Assuming they recognise the sickness for what it is, they will usually try home remedies or visit one or more indigenous healers first. It is only if they have not improved by then that they will go to the doctor. By this stage, the illness is often well-advanced and treatment is more difficult. In one case, a woman waited two weeks and visited a number of indigenous healers before consulting a doctor; who diagnosed her as having (by this time) well-advanced typhoid fever.

Although Western medicine is effective in certain cases, my informants had little faith in the moral character of most practitioners. They understand that doctors, pharmaceutical companies and hospital administrators are in business to make money, and they are not above extending courses of treatment in order to extract the maximum profit from their patients. As one amateur herbalist told me, "If hospitals know you have money, [they] slow down the process of healing, so that you pay more."

> I was discussing money problems with a friend, the wife of a shopkeeper. She said that ordinarily they could keep their heads above water, but this week they had had to provide an emergency loan to a friend. The friend had gone into labour and been admitted to hospital,[80] but had been unable to pay the hospital bill. Instead, they kept her in the ward until the bill was paid off.

My informant's attitude to the behaviour of the hospital administration was one of anger, rather than shock or surprise. Whether the events unfolded exactly as my informant heard them is not the point: neither she, nor anyone else who heard the story, was particularly surprised by it. They were angered, but it was the sort of thing that Western medical practitioners were expected to do — they had a reputation for it.

The intersection of Western attitudes and indigenous attitudes to sickness was marked in my own experiences:

> Towards the end of my fieldwork, I suffered a string of debilitating, if minor, illnesses. At one point, I came down with an eye infection — probably conjunctivitis — and a severe sore throat. Unable to see or speak without discomfort, I was plied with alcohol (to numb the throat) and out-of-date eye drops bought from a pharmacy. The eye infection cleared up within a few days; however, I decided to visit a doctor for my throat.
>
> I was escorted to a specific surgery (there were several dotted about the main roads near Sangandaan). After I had seen the doctor and walked down to the market to have my prescription filled, the neighbour who had escorted me asked me what I thought of the doctor. He told me that, of all the general practitioners in the neighbourhood, he was the one with the best reputation, for honesty and for skill. They wanted me to go to an honest doctor, because otherwise I might have

been ripped off, since white people — *Amerikanos* — have a reputation for wealth.

I had been willing to try home remedies or visit indigenous healers for a variety of minor ailments; however, when I felt that my health might seriously be at risk, I bypassed the usual channels and went straight to see a Western-style doctor. Of course, the cost of treatment was of no concern to me.

The high cost of treatment is not the only possible expense attendant upon illnesses caused by *mikrobia*. In addition, if the breadwinner is sick, then time taken off work for treatment will lead to a loss of income: there is no sick leave, employees are paid only for the days they work. This leads to a double bind: the cost of treatment is compounded by the loss of income while sick.

The attitude towards Western medicine that I found most prevalent amongst my Asogue Street neighbours, then, was an ambivalent one: on one hand, The corpus of Western medical knowledge and its associated pharmaceuticals was accorded great effectiveness by Asogue Street residents in the treatment of a variety of sicknesses, mainly *mikrobia*-induced. On the other hand, it was considered to be an expensive business, and this expense, difficult to bear at the best of times, was compounded by the perceived lack of scruples among many health professionals.

Doctors and hospitals as curers of sickness were not the only aspects of Western medicine with which my informants were familiar. Preventive medicine or public health projects were also apparent.

Public Health

Manila is a dirty, crowded city. In the poorer areas, roads are dilapidated, sewers crumbling and open, green areas all but non-existent. Garbage collection simply does not happen:[81] rubbish of all kinds piles up along streets, in canals, overflowing from the few rubbish bins to be found on public thoroughfares. Stagnant pools of water are everywhere. Under such conditions, flies and mosquitoes breed in their uncounted thousands, every one a possible disease carrier (while malaria is non-existent in Manila, "H-fever" — dengue fever — does exist). Below ground, the tangled and chaotic

water and sewage systems age and leak and contaminate each other; with all the risks of waterborne diseases this entails.

> During the wet season, the Philippines Department of Health (DOH) released figures which suggested that there had been a marked increase in the incidence of cholera throughout the country, particularly in Luzon. The twin centres of the largest outbreaks were the province of Bicol, in south-east Luzon, and the low-lying northwest areas of Manila, which includes Malabon.
>
> For the period from January until October 6, 1994, there were 3098 confirmed cases of cholera throughout the Philippines, and 203 deaths. Of these, there were 524 confirmed cases in Manila, and no fatalities. Ten of the cases from Manila were from Malabon (only one was recorded in Tugatog), and 26 were from Caloocan City.
>
> A DOH official told me that, as far as the department could determine, the outbreak of cholera was not significantly larger than in earlier wet seasons (especially if the Bicol figures were subtracted — it seems the outbreak there was exceptional, its vector being the food served by an ambulant vendor). Instead, the main reason for the apparent increase was under-reportage of cholera in earlier years, especially during the Marcos presidency, when it had been euphemistically described as a variety of gastrointestinal illnesses. Marcos had preferred to suppress cholera reporting in order to make the Philippines appear more inviting to foreign investors and tourists.
>
> Malabon and nearby areas are low-lying, swampy areas which suffer from poor drainage; under the existing sewage conditions, cholera was something to be expected. As with European cities, the eradication of cholera was a question of civil engineering — public health programs could, only at best, contain it.

The doctor at the Tugatog free clinic told me that there had been a handful of cholera cases that he knew of; nobody I knew contracted the disease.

Apart from the dangers of a city with inadequate infrastructure collapsing under the weight of its huge and growing population, there are problems of pollution and, for slum dwellers, nutrition.

I am unable to supply any figures on the extent and levels of airborne pollution in the city. Suffice it to say that there appears to be very little in the way of policing of emissions from factories or vehicles. On major roads, the

air is blue with exhaust fumes: by the end of every day people's ears, hair, nostrils and skin are coated in a layer of soot. Everything looks grimy from industrial fumes — during rain, the water coming off the sides of buildings varies in colour from dark grey to deepest black.

During the wet season, when Asogue Street and its environs were repeatedly flooded, most people lived for at least several days of each week ankle-deep in thick, black water. Bloated, drowned rats, human excrement and organic and inorganic waste floated in this morass. Perhaps half of the people I know ended up suffering some sort of skin disease of the feet or ankles, all of them lumped under the general term *halipunga*. They treated these by keeping their feet as dry as possible for as long as possible, and liberally dosing them with antibiotic foot powders. Many of the complaints did not clear up until after the wet season.

People are generally well aware of the dangers posed to them by their environment; perhaps because of the public-awareness campaigns increasingly mounted by the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) during 1994. I am unaware when health warnings first appeared on cigarette packets in the Philippines; however, early on in my stay, I was approached by several people who wanted to know if it was true that smoking was dangerous to their health. On the other hand, many people already knew of the dangers associated with tobacco use.

Although they are aware of the unhygienic nature of their surroundings, and take what steps they can to minimise disease breeding grounds, there is little they can do to tackle the large problems of the built environment. They lack expertise, funds, scale and political clout — and they know it. Accustomed to being ignored by their government (except at election time), they have little expectation or hope of serious change for the better.

Hygiene-related diseases apart, malnutrition was another common problem. I did not hear of any extreme cases of malnutrition: most people were able to get regular amounts of rice, meat and vegetables, the basics for

daily survival. The problem was not so much with adults or children, as with infants: almost all of them were raised on infant milk formula.

The dangers of infant formula, both to the child's health and as an economic burden to third world families, are well-documented (Balderrama-Guzman 1982; Muller 1975). In any *sari-sari* store, one of the commonest products available (after rice, noodles, cigarettes and gin), was infant milk formula. Of the half-dozen or so brands I saw regularly for sale, all but one contained the fine print: "Product of Nestlé Corp, Philippines". Television and radio advertisements regularly showed healthy, impossibly plump babies or child prodigies (musicians or chess champions, all of whom hailed from well-off Filipino families with impeccable American-accented English — the sign of the truly well-educated).[82] And all of them insinuated — without ever promising as much — that high nutritional content in baby's milk would do the same for the viewer's infant. Such a high nutritional content could, of course, be found in the commodity being advertised. The advertisements were always followed by a health warning, which ran for about three seconds, in English. I am a native English speaker, and I had to hear the warning about twenty times before I knew exactly what was being said. I never heard a similar health warning in Tagalog or any other common Filipino tongue, which the viewers would be more likely to catch.

Almost every mother I knew switched her children to infant formula at the earliest possible opportunity. Those who did not were unable to because of the expense: they were usually very poor at the time they were suckling their children. Although most mothers seemed unaware of the dangers of infant formula, many added that they were poor milk producers, that they usually dried up quite quickly after giving birth.

Apart from the health risks associated with infant formulae, the commodity is also relatively expensive. In many households, the formula rivalled or even exceeded rice as the single most important and costly consumable purchased per month. However, I heard very little about plans to promote breastfeeding among the urban poor.

In other ways, the DOH was very active during my fieldwork period. On two occasions, the second on October 17, 1994, stalls were set up and manned by local volunteers (sometimes referred to as "Barangay Health Workers", or BHWs). From early morning to early evening, the stalls provided free inoculations (particularly for polio) and vitamins (vitamin A, iron and iodine) for children and pregnant and nursing mothers. Referred to as *Libreng Sangkap* [Free Vitamins/Nutrition] or *Sangkap Pinoy* [Vitamins/Nutrition for Filipinos], the occasions were considered a rare example of the Philippine government undertaking a project on behalf of the urban poor which was of real and immediate benefit, rather than simply a flag-waving or vote-getting exercise. Informants said they had never before seen such things organised, and doubted that they would likely be repeated in years to come. People believed the *Sangkap Pinoy* only existed because of the force of personality of one man: then Secretary of Health Juan Flavier.

Of all the elected and appointed government officials, Flavier was the only one who received unconditional praise from informants. It was said of him that he really wished to benefit the people during his term of appointment (Flavier was not an elected official, and so his activities could not be seen as vote-winning exercises). Apart from *Sangkap Pinoy*, the DOH was also in the public eye in commercials which promoted hygiene and preventative medicine. Additionally, certain commercially-packaged foods were able to get DOH approval if they were found to be of significant nutritional value (they also served as sponsors). A Protestant appointed by the country's only-ever Protestant President, Flavier was often at odds with the powerful Philippine Catholic hierarchy over his promotions of condoms, safe sex, STD awareness and, worst of all, family planning. None of my predominantly-Catholic informants ever questioned Flavier on grounds of religious ideology; although many probably disagreed with him on his position on family planning (not surprising, given the strong positive sanctions on large families among the poor), I do not think that any ever questioned his apparent good intentions.[83]

Over and above the health problems cause by the deterioration (or non-existence) of civil amenities, the lack of attention paid to preventative public health prior to the period of Flavier's direction of the DOH has compounded the general health problems in the Manila slums. Inoculations are among the cheapest and most effective forms of public health, yet no informant could ever remember when they were organised nationally, and free, before 1994 (when the two *Sangkap Pinoy* I observed were held). Hepatitis inoculations for children were held at several-month intervals at the local school, but these were not free, and the price was beyond the means of many parents.

Aside from the occasional DOH activity, a clinic was maintained by the municipal government near the old Tugatog plaza. The plaza, an open, concreted area with a few benches and bounded by struggling trees, boasted a few cages, in one of which was a bedraggled-looking bird. Apparently this was a Philippine Eagle, a species unique to the archipelago and one of its national symbols, now highly endangered. The plaza was not frequented by Asogue Street residents: it was across a main road and was near nothing of any interest to residents, except for the clinic (which was not often visited). Although the resident doctor at the clinic gave consultations, there were rarely enough pharmaceuticals for free supply: while there were suspicions that someone connected with the clinic was selling the supplies on the black market (hence the shortage), the clinic workers complained that they received so few pharmaceuticals to distribute that they could only give them to the very poorest or most urgent cases.

On one occasion, photocopied pamphlets were distributed throughout Tugatog, inviting people to have a free consultation at the plaza. It had been organised by the mayor of Malabon, who was up for re-election within the month. Although a few people took advantage of the offer, they remained cynical about the mayor's motives, and pointedly remarked that he was trying to ape Flavier in order to curry favour with voters.[84]

Illnesses Caused by the Spirits

Apart from the dangers posed by cold winds and *mikrobia*, Filipinos also have to live with attacks made by the Third Kind. The Third Kind possess powers to harm, to help, for mischief or for prosperity. In general, they have little to do with humans; however, it is not uncommon for people to fall sick through the actions of vengeful or spiteful *duwende*, or other *maligno*.

No one really knows exactly *how* the Third Kind are able to cause sickness, but they can. Such sicknesses may take many forms, although the most commonly-reported symptoms involve the body being locked into a rigid, often quite painful, stance. This may affect the whole body, in which the afflicted person folds into a foetal stance, or it may be that only a limb, an arm or leg or even the neck, is held in an unusual — and uncomfortable — position. Informants said that sometimes the spirits took control of, or possessed, the body of the afflicted, and caused them to take bizarre postures in much the same way that a puppeteer can manipulate a marionette.

> A television news article reported that there had been an outbreak of spirit possession among the students at a high school in Davao [Mindanao]. *Duwende* were suggested as the possible culprits, but a priest who was interviewed claimed that the problem most likely had a psychological cause. In commenting on this, Ofelia told me that, occasionally, students at the secondary school near Asogue Street would become rigid, "stiff like boards". If another student touched them, they too would go stiff. She wasn't sure what caused it, but thought it may be demons.

At other times, attacks by the Third Kind produce more commonly-encountered afflictions, such as fever, *pasma*, or skin infections.

> Marleen [a schoolteacher at the local elementary school] told me that an 11-year-old girl saw a black *duwende* with horns, a *demonyo*. She pointed it out to her friends, but it ran away. Now, because she offended the *duwende* [by pointing it out to her friends], she has sores on the tips of her fingers. Marleen said she would be taken to an *albularyo* because a doctor

could not cure those sores. According to Marleen, the best way to effect a cure would be to apologise to the *duwende*.

Whether or not the little girl really believed that she saw a *duwende*, or merely said that she did in order to get attention is, I think, beside the point. Similarly, whether Marleen really believed that the girl had seen what she said she'd seen is also not centrally important (Marleen accepted the existence of *duwende*, although she did not give credence to every reported encounter that she heard of). What I think is important is that the story *could* be true, as far as Marleen was concerned: the *duwende* acted as a *duwende* might be expected to do under the circumstances, and it is well known that *duwende* live in the schoolyard.

It is interesting that this *duwende* was described as being horned, and was also called a *demonyo*, a demon. This would appear to contradict the typology I set out earlier, and indeed it does. No typology exists without exceptions: *duwende* may well have horns sometimes, and they might also be demons (which are not normally classified as being of the Third Kind). However, I think most informants would argue that, strictly speaking, *duwende* and *demonyo* are quite distinct types of entity.

The White Lady which was reported as inhabiting the school grounds was also known to possess girls of about the same age. Marleen believes in the White Lady, although she has not seen one in or near Andy's tamarind tree.[85] She told me the following stories, and her hair stood on end, she got chills, while telling them.

> Last year, a girl, 11-12 years old, with a very quiet personality, arrived early one morning at the elementary school. She went to the home economics building where (she later reported) she felt as though there was someone else there, although she was quite alone. It was as though she had been ordered to enter the building, and she was told by someone to sweep the floor. Later she was found there, unable to speak, she could only moan and grunt. The caretaker there is a *manggagamot* [a type of healer], and he was able to cure her. He said the White Lady had entered the girl's body — she wanted to enter the body of a quiet child. Marleen didn't know why.
>
> This year, at graduation, a girl of about the same age, also with a quiet personality, was instructed to fetch water from

the ablution block. She ran out of the building, very frightened. She had seen a woman dressed in white, a long, white dress, and aged more than forty.

There have also been reports of a man aged over forty, dressed in a white polo *barong*.[86] Marleen said he used to be a headmaster while still alive.

According to Marleen, when a schoolteacher dies, as part of *lamay* they are customarily laid out for one night at the school to which they were assigned.

Further examples of sickness caused by *maligno* attack:

Don, a 10-year-old boy, developed a large, black lump on his right inside thigh, which was painful, kept growing and caused him to limp. A doctor took an x-ray of the leg, but it showed no abnormalities. A native healer suggested that he may have kicked a *maligno*, perhaps in the schoolyard, by accident. As a young man, Don's grandfather [Lolo Badong] had his head locked sideways for some months, possibly because he had offended a *maligno*. This occurred in a mango plantation in what is now the elementary school grounds.

Tony told me that, some years earlier, he had developed a lump in his groin, and was unable to urinate without difficulty. His uncle, a healer and member of the *Espiritistas*,[87] told him that he had accidentally urinated on a spirit, perhaps a female one, who lived in a tree near the house [who, being offended by this, had retaliated by causing the lump]. Tony thought about cutting down the tree, but decided that he didn't want to offend the spirit any further. His uncle said the spirit was neither good nor bad, merely offended. To treat the affliction, he slept with a lump of *tawas* wrapped in a leaf [possibly a guava leaf] under his pillow. The lump cleared up.[88]

Should one encounter an *asuwang* in broad daylight, they may stare hungrily at you when you are not looking. This will bring on a stomach ache, which is treated by seeking out a healer who will say a few words, and place some ginger on your head to draw out the pain.

Sicknesses caused by *duwende* or other *maligno* are usually treated quite easily by healers. However, they can also be fatal.

A young man in his thirties and physically strong was working at a building site when he dropped a beam on the ground. He began to feel unwell and, by the time he got home, he felt very sick. He decided to see an *albularyo* [herbalist], who told him that he had hit a *duwende* when he dropped the beam, and the

> *duwende* had made him sick in return. His left arm started to shrivel. He was told what to do to get better, but his wife didn't believe and she took him to see a doctor, who gave him an injection. The next day, he was dead.

According to the person who told me this story, the man would not have died if he had not gone to see the doctor. The *duwende* had merely made the victim sick in retaliation for having had a beam dropped on it, and it was suggested to me that the intention of the *duwende* would not have been to kill the man. Not only was the sickness considered by informants to be incurable by Western methods, those same methods — the injection — had a lethal effect because of the circumstances of the illness.

Although sicknesses caused by *duwende* are considered to be the result of some individual's actions, it is only after the sickness has become manifest, and a *duwende* has been identified as responsible, that the patient and the healer can then "backtrack" and determine what specific action caused the *duwende's* anger. If I cut down a tree, and nothing happens, then all is well and good. But if I cut down a tree and sometime later develop an unexplained illness, then it is obvious that a *duwende* (or some other spirit) was living in that tree. It is a satisfying explanation for why I have become sick: I have not really done any intentional wrong, but still I have offended an irascible (and invisible) spirit.

Although the Third Kind — at least, those commonly encountered by humans in Manila — do not normally kill, they often frighten. Whether their ability to scare is deliberate on their part, or simply a normal reaction on the part of the humans who encounter them, I do not know. However, the fact is that the Third Kind *are* frightening, both when encountered and when discussed late at night. People often said that when talking about such matters it made the hairs on their body stand up; they also pointed out that one indicator of the presence of the Third Kind was that, often, one's hairs stood on end, perhaps without apparent reason. Hairs standing on end was considered to be a physical manifestation of fear.

Fright itself is dangerous, as can be seen from the example of bad dreams. Depending on who I asked, I got a different answer as to what

dreams were. Generally, people said they were images, memories or stuff from the subconscious. However, as has been seen with the death of Lolo Badong, they believed that spirits of the recently dead could visit in dreams, although such dream visits were not necessarily indicative of any ill-will on the part of the deceased. Such dreams could give fright, though.

There is a kind of dream that is not merely frightening, but can also kill: the *bangungot*. Nobody was able to tell me what caused the *bangungot* — perhaps those who found out were the ones who died from it — although eating cold foods at night may bring it on. The *bangungot* is the dream that kills, a nightmare so intense that the dreamer dies of sheer fright, unless someone else realises what is happening and awakens the sleeper.[89] Following awakening, they must be kept from returning to sleep. I am unsure as to whether or not they should be allowed to sleep at all that same night; however, by the next night, the danger has definitely passed. One person I know of who suffered a *bangungot* did not remember what he had dreamed about after his companion woke him, while the father of two orphans who lived in the same compound was said to have died from a *bangungot*.

Bangungot are not, strictly speaking, the result of an attack by the Third Kind. No one I questioned knows exactly what they are. Although exceedingly rare, they are deadly when they do occur: a sleeper left in the throes of a *bangungot* will certainly die.

Sicknesses From God

Very rarely, God was cited as the direct cause of an illness. Although God was considered to be the ultimate cause of all things (including sickness) — so that it was meaningful to talk about praying to Him to ask for health, the absence of sickness for oneself and one's family — he was not often mentioned as the agent directly responsible for an affliction, in the way that *duwende*, *mikrobia* or cold winds were. Rather, He was considered to be a direct causal agent on only a couple of occasions, in that certain sicknesses were "gifts" or "punishments" from God.

Once, I was told that chronic, incurable diseases such as polio or cancer were gifts from God. I think that the person who described these

diseases in this fashion meant that the suffering they entailed were challenges to be overcome or used to strengthen one's faith.

Another informant told me that HIV/AIDS was a punishment from God, because it affected those who broke God's laws (such as the sexually promiscuous). When asked why unborn babies could contract HIV/AIDS when they had done no wrong, she replied that one should not question God's ways or reasons.[90]

Sorcery and *Usog*

All of the sickness-causing agents so far discussed operate in some way beyond the range of normal human relations. They are all, in some way, outside and beyond humanity; whether that is because they are of the Third Kind, microscopic organisms, or effects of the built or natural environment. However, it is also possible for humans to make one another sick, and this is achieved through the use of sorcery or *usog*.

Sorcery

In the Philippines, sorcery has many names. The commonest name is *kulam*, which refers to that body or bodies of knowledge and set or sets of techniques which are learnt and thereafter used to cause sickness or misfortune in others. *Kulam* is exceptionally rare in Manila: I never met a single person who confessed to having enough knowledge of the topic to be able actually to attack another. However, it was, like the *asuwang*, said to be much more common in the provinces, especially in the olden days.

There are a number of different sub-categories of *kulam* (see Lieban 1967:48-64); however, these were only to be found in places rumoured to have a large resident population of *mangkukulam* [sorcerers],[91] such as Siquijor (also known as the "Island of Witches") and the provinces of Samar-Leyte. Like the *asuwang*, *kulam* was something to be found long ago or far away. However, a *mangkukulam* did live in Asogue Street at one time, although no one knew at the time that she was a sorcerer:

> Josie, a 22-year-old woman, had been suffering from an unexplained, unspecified illness for some time. She went to see an indigenous healer in Tondo, who put her into a trance and then asked her what her name was. She wrote the name of an ex-neighbour (who I'll call Maria). The healer diagnosed her as being the victim of *kulam*, and that Maria had caused it. He was then able to cure the sickness. Back in Asogue Street, this provided a socially-acceptable explanation for Josie's sickness. She had been friends with Maria's daughter, but they had quarrelled before Maria and her family left the area. Maria was remembered as being spiteful and was widely disliked, common characteristics of a *mangkukulam*. As she no longer lived in the area, there was no need for a confrontation between her and Josie's family. When I asked Josie what she intended to do about it, she replied that she would pray for Maria's soul.

Apart from this story, *kulam* was usually only encountered well away from Asogue Street and its immediate environs or in the past. The following story, told to me by Eden of her childhood in Bulacan, is typical in that respect:

> When I was 17, I was courted by one of my classmates, but I didn't like him. A little later, I saw a bullfrog with three eyes, the third eye in the middle of its forehead. After I saw the bullfrog, I went back to my father's stall at the market. There was something wrong because I knew where my father's stall was, but I just walked straight past it. I didn't want my *merienda* [afternoon snack]. That evening, when my father spoke to me, I could only answer him in nonsense words. After that, I collapsed, and was taken to see the doctor. The doctor said there was nothing wrong with me, even though the right side of my body was cold, and the left side of my body was hot. After that, I was taken to see six different *albularyos* [herbalists]. By this time I was uncontrollable: even five men couldn't hold me down, and I would eat huge amounts of food, and then throw it all up again. The sixth *albularyo* said that I was the victim of *kulam*. When I jumped off the roof of my house, and they poured boiling water on me, then they knew who the *mangkukulam* was. They poured boiling water on me and the *mangkukulam*, who was nearby, was burnt by it and screamed. I wasn't hurt. Then they knew who the *mangkukulam* was; it was one of our neighbours. They chased her and whipped her with the tail of a stingray. The wounds from that whipping have never healed. The *mangkukulam* was a relative of the classmate who tried to court me, but I'm not sure how they are related. She had put *kulam* on me to try to stop me from going to Manila to study. The *mangkukulam* had only one eye: the

sixth *albularyo* said that she had put her other eye onto the three-eyed bullfrog so that she could watch me.

There are a number of characteristics here which are common to stories about *kulam*. Firstly, the events described took place during childhood, and in a province at some remove from the storyteller's daily life as a married woman in Asogue Street.

Note the symptoms displayed by the ensorceled woman: a huge appetite, followed by vomiting; immense strength; confusion; and an imbalance of hot and cold elements in the body. Apart from the final symptom, these are all common signs of an attack by sorcery. This is the only time that I heard of such a specific hot/cold imbalance in the body, exactly split down the middle. People I asked about it said they weren't sure what it meant, either; but they were very impressed by it.

Josie was far more forgiving towards an unmasked *mangkukulam* than were the victims and their families in other stories. Although the execution of sorcerers was something that only ever seemed to happen in folktales, it was not uncommon for *mangkukulam*, once discovered, to be whipped with stingray tails (note that stingray tails are also efficacious against *asuwang* and can be used as *anting-anting*).

Another characteristic of *kulam* which is found in both Eden's and Josie's stories[32] is its *reversibility*. By this, I mean that whenever a *mangkukulam* magically attacks someone, it is possible to attack the sorcerer back by using the body of the victim. A bridge has been opened up between the *mangkukulam* and the victim, ostensibly for the sole use of the sorcerer, but one which can be used by a healer to send something back to the sorcerer.

In Eden's case, the reversible nature of *kulam* is exemplified by the use of hot water. When it was poured on Eden's body, she felt no pain and suffered no injury; instead, it was the *mangkukulam*, several houses away, who screamed in agony. Jabbing the victim with sharp points (especially, but not exclusively stingray tails) has the same effect: even if the victim cries out in pain, it is the sorcerer who is believed to be suffering (even though they

may be some distance away). When Josie was treated, the *manggagamot* did not ask her what the name of the *mangkukulam* was; he asked direct questions, "*Ano ang pangalan mo?*" ["What is your name?"]. Everyone in the room assumed that he was speaking directly with the sorcerer and that the sorcerer herself was replying. Josie was the involuntary and unwilling eyes, ears and mouth of the sorcerer.

The most striking element of Eden's story is that of the three-eyed frog. Abnormal or outsize animals recur in informant accounts and folktales, and generally point towards either sorcery (in this case, the frog acted as a kind of familiar for the *mangkukulam*) or to the spirit world, especially if the animal has an unnaturally long tail or is an unusually large dog, pig or snake (*asuwang* can also take these forms). *Mangbabarang*, a category of sorcerer found only in the Visayan island group (Lieban 1967:50-53), make use of (possibly oversized) insects which they keep in jars until they wish to attack someone. The insects are set free and ordered to go to the proposed victim. They then either burrow into that person through bodily orifices or materialise inside them, causing sickness and, possibly, death.

While sorcerers may attack their victims because of perceived grievances (as was the case with both Eden and Josie), they are also available for hire. Their services rate in the hundreds to thousands of pesos (unlike the healers, who do not charge for their services, and can cure *kulam* for a few pesos' donation). This may partly be due to the inherent danger of working with *kulam* — its reversibility ensures that any attack can also leave the *mangkukulam* open to counterattack, and discovery may result in the victim's outraged family seeking vengeance.

Usog

Whereas *kulam* is a deliberate magical attack on someone by a sorcerer who has trained in the art, *usog* is an involuntary, innate ability where one individual habitually causes sickness in others. In this, it is similar to Evans-Pritchard's standard definition of witchcraft among the Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1976[1937]). Although the correct term for someone with this ability

is *manguusog*, my informants told me that this was an impolite term, since it implies that the infliction of *usog* has been done deliberately and voluntarily. However, I will retain the use of the term as an alternative to "witch", since the polite term, *malakas ang makausog* [strong ability to perform *usog*] is rather unwieldy.

While one person thought that a *manguusog* typically has what he called a "strong spirit", which overflowed on to others in the form of *usog*, most people did not agree with that definition.[93] However, they were unable to suggest what exactly it was that gave some people the ability to inflict *usog* on others. Typically, if a *manguusog* is tired or hungry, and speaks to, or looks at, another person, that second person generally — but not always — begins to suffer severe stomach pains. The pain is considered to be eventually fatal if left untreated. Treatment for *usog* is simple: the victim must seek out the *manguusog* responsible, who will then make the sign of the cross over the victim's forehead and stomach, rubbing in a little saliva as they do so. I have seen people rapidly recover from quite severe-looking stomach pain as a result of being treated in this way.

One of my neighbours, Liza, was well-known as a *manguusog*. In fact, her inability to control her faculty for *usog* was a source of frustration to her: she would often make innocent people ill, but was quite unable to induce sickness in her husband, whom she sometimes wanted to punish when she felt that he had been drinking too much and too often. Her husband, Ganny, claimed that he was immune because he didn't believe in it. Ganny — the same Ganny who did not accept the existence of the White Lady — was related to three *manguusog* by marriage or blood.

Due to its involuntary nature, blame is never attached to the *manguusog*. Indeed, sufferers considered it an almost funny — if inconvenient — *faux pas* on the part of the *manguusog*. In order to avoid accidentally harming anyone, Liza could often be seen after doing the laundry (when she was at her most tired and hungry) rushing to *sari-sari* stores and ordering bread or snacks, muttering "*Puera usog*" ["No entry to *usog*"], a phrase which is supposed to protect bystanders from harm.

Otherwise, she would neither speak to, nor look at, anyone for fear of inflicting *usog* on them. Once she had half-finished the snack and had rested a little, she would perk up and begin to chat quite gaily with those around her.

Puera usog can also be said by people near the *manguusog*, and this will work to protect them from *usog*. Ofelia summed up a number of common remedies to protect children from *usog* (children are thought to be especially vulnerable):

> I remember my parents saying it [*puera usog*] under their breath whenever they were around people they didn't know. They would also pin ginger to our clothes, because that would also protect us from *usog*. Here in Manila, mothers sometimes paint a bit of red lipstick on their babies to protect them. The red is because, according to the old stories, the spirits are afraid of red. I've heard this both here and in the Visayas.

It will be remembered that the spirits of the recently dead can induce stomach cramps — *usog* — in people they don't know or that this can also be caused by a hungry *asuwang* staring at someone, and that a piece of ginger placed on the head suffices for treatment. It will also be remembered that some families dressed their children in red for a few days after Lolo Badong's funeral. I am not aware that the use of red colours in turning aside the spirits has any connection with red being indicative of heat in the treatment of "red eye". After all, there is no necessarily unifying symbolic structures or generative principles "behind" the various manifestations of illness causation or treatment: red eyes and frightened spirits may have absolutely no prior connection with each other.

While Liza was a powerful *manguusog*, not all are quite so dangerous to be near. In many cases, the chances are that most people will not contract *usog* if the *manguusog* is tired or hungry, or if contracted, that the pain suffered will be less intense.

While it seems that most *manguusog* are simply born that way, no one ever suggested to me that it may be hereditary: Ganny's family was an oddity in that there were three *manguusog*, and even in this case the links

were partly by marriage, rather than completely by heredity. Although most are born with the ability, it is also possible to become a *manguusog* after suffering a bout of *usog*. Such people are rarely capable of inflicting intense *usog* on others, although sometimes they can — there is no way of telling. However, they are considered capable of creating yet more *manguusog*.

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Once people become sick, it almost goes without saying that they will attempt to treat the illness as rapidly as possible. In the next chapter, I examine the various options available for healing, and then discuss the strategies which the residents of Asogue Street employ to obtain relief rapidly and cheaply.

Chapter 5: Healing

Sickness takes many forms, and has numerous sources: it may be caused by the Third Kind, by sorcery, by *mikrobia*; it may result in a minor headcold, severe stomach pain, or a life-threatening infection. Asogue Street residents recognise a variety of sickness-causing agents, and are aware of numerous prophylactic techniques and practices to avoid sicknesses, but even the best measures eventually prove ineffectual: people become sick. When this happens, it is time to find a partial or complete cure, whether this is to be found in home remedies, pharmaceuticals, visits to a "native healer",[94] or the doctor.

This chapter will present the various types of healing practices used by informants, both those within the home and those which require visits to various sorts of healing practitioners, as well as descriptions of the types of healer to be found near Asogue Street. Following this is a discussion of the decision-making process by which most people ascertain the nature of an illness, and the best course of treatment.

There are three basic modes of treatment which people employ when they fall sick: home remedies; local healers; and Western-style doctors. Each of these will be examined in turn.

Home Remedies

Many ailments are perceived by informants as being easily treatable without recourse to healing specialists, whether they be doctors or native healers. These treatment techniques can be conducted either in the home without any particular props, or merely require herbal medicines or pharmaceuticals which are readily available from the vicinity or the local *sari-sari* store, respectively. Where medication of some sort is required, pharmaceuticals are generally preferred to herbs, despite the fact that the latter are cheaper (often they are available *gratis*). The more expensive antibiotics and cough/cold preparations are also generally seen as being more concentrated

and therefore more effective than "home grown" remedies. There is a dilemma because of the greater cost of pharmaceuticals and their greater perceived effectiveness. Given this dilemma between the less effective herbs and the more expensive pharmaceuticals (in those cases where both can be used to treat a given illness), people often opt for the cheaper medication for themselves, while more readily buying the more expensive Western-style medicines for their children. Adults are stronger, and better able to ward off infections or illnesses: children are not so strong, and so it is better not to take chances with their health.[95]

As may be expected, it is the most common, and most minor, sicknesses which are most easily treatable by the simplest and most readily-available remedies. There is no one major type of sickness-causing agent which is held responsible for the various sorts of common illnesses: they may be weak *mikrobia*, a hot/cold imbalance, a "bad wind", or complications (such as fever) which have arisen from *pilay*. Often, the causal agent may not be identified. Sicknesses caused by spirit attacks are fairly rare and therefore reasonably serious, while illnesses which result from sorcery and the more virulent forms of *mikrobia* are extraordinarily rare and, as may be guessed, quite dangerous, even life-threatening. Although it is true that minor sicknesses can, if not treated, develop grave complications, they are so easily dealt with that this eventuality is almost unheard of. Essentially, the rarer an illness is, the more likely it is to be serious, even life-threatening, and vice-versa: this is a correlation, rather than a causal relationship between rarity and danger. The converse is also true, in that common illnesses are basically nuisances rather than dangerous, and relatively easier and cheaper to treat.

Herbs In and Around the Home

Apart from the herbal remedies mentioned here, there a number of less-commonly encountered mineral and herbal treatments. These were apparently used more often in the provinces than in Manila. In the city, guava is perhaps the most common herbal remedy: its moist leaves are said to be good for the promotion of healing in cuts; the dried leaves are burnt

and the smoke is used to hasten healing of the perineum after childbirth; lastly, its leaves can be infused into a tea which is said to settle the stomach if one is suffering from diarrhoea. Diarrhoea [*pagtatae*] is not uncommon, especially among children. Its causes are manifold, particularly from drinking unsafe water,[96] and it may also occur as a complication from fever or gastrointestinal infections. The bitter tea is said to cause a single, massive bowel evacuation; following this, the sufferer will be completely cured of diarrhoea, assuming that the malady was not a complication of some ailment other than a simple infection brought on by drinking unsafe water.

If the diarrhoea persists, this is seen as a cause for alarm, especially in infants and young children. At this point, the treatment may switch to oral rehydration salts (*oresol*) or commercially-available anti-diarrhoeal formulations. The Department of Health and various clinics have more-or-less successfully promoted the use of *oresol*, usually made up from household supplies of salt, sugar and boiled water. Volunteer Barangay Health Workers generally advise adults to give this to their children, rather than purchase the relatively expensive (and often counter-productive) anti-diarrhoeal treatments. However, commercial medications are widely taken, especially if the sufferer is a child. As with infant health formulae or cough and cold preparations, the anti-diarrhoea medications are heavily advertised on television and radio, to the extent that brand names are often used to indicate the type of medication.[97] Such heavy advertising tends to make people more aware of the pharmaceutical products, to the extent that they preferentially purchase such items even when cheaper and effective alternatives are easily available (see also Hardon 1991:44-45).

Guava leaves are also said to be effective in promoting rapid and uninfected healing of cuts and other open wounds, especially those resulting from circumcision. I could not verify their use in this practice, since no circumcisions were performed during my fieldwork. I was told that the leaves were traditionally used as bandages in such cases. The use of guava leaves to dress circumcision or other cuts has been supplanted by the use of

purchased bandaids, bandages and antiseptic solutions or broad-spectrum antibiotics.

Another item commonly used to treat a variety of illnesses is *tawas*. There are actually two sorts of *tawas*: the first is the powder of a white, crystalline rock. The second kind of *tawas* is a set of props used by native healers to help them effect cures. For now, discussion will be restricted to the former variety of *tawas*.

Tawas can be purchased, either in rock form or, more commonly, as a powder, from any market. It is believed to have a variety of uses, from deodorant to tooth cleaner. It is always powdered before use; sometimes this powder is left on a plate or in an open plastic bag near windows, where it is thought to deodorise air entering the house. Sometimes it is used as a personal deodorant; a little powder is applied to the armpits after washing.

Its most important use is in dental hygiene. It is believed to have strong cleaning properties when applied to the teeth and gums, and so is used as a replacement for, or adjunct to, commercially-purchased toothpaste. At least one brand of locally-manufactured toothpaste was advertised as containing *tawas* as an active ingredient; however, this brand was one of the more expensive on the market, and so was not much used by informants.

It can also be applied to *bungi* [swollen gums], other gum sores, or abscesses.

Another mineral, *insenso*, has a wide variety of applications. Normally shaved or powdered and then burnt with a mixture of charcoal, dried leaves, feathers and candles, the smoke can be used to repel any *maligno* which has entered a house. It can also help treat "relapses" (illnesses associated with childbirth or menstruation) — once again, the *insenso* shavings are mixed with dried leaves and the patient is bathed in the smoke from the fire; a technique also sometimes used with skin ailments.

> Mary Lou [a woman of about 25] had chickenpox and she was crying with the pain. She had had her period, which made the chickenpox bigger and more swollen. Ofelia used the *insenso*,

> bathing Mary Lou in the smoke. The chicken pox didn't get any bigger.

In order to use *insenso* to best effect, it should be mixed with powdered *kamangyan*.[98] A powerful, and fairly common, *anting-anting* can be made out of a bullet, from which the cordite has been removed. The cordite is replaced with a mixture of powdered *insenso* and *kamangyan*.

Asupre [sulfur] is mixed with coconut oil and applied to wounds, sores and *halipunga* [athlete's foot/fungal infections]. Finally, the shavings of the *ipil-ipil* tree [*leucara glauca*] are drunk as a tea to provide relief from dysmenorrhoea, painful or delayed menstruation. People said they did not think it had abortifacient properties.

Unlike *tawas* and guava, which I saw used fairly often, I did not see the other home remedies in use. This does not mean that they were not employed — after all, they were easily obtained at Sangandaan market for a fraction of the price of pharmaceuticals — merely that I was not a party to their use. For cuts and *halipunga*, pharmaceuticals were the more usual remedy, and I was not generally privy to details of women's menstrual cycles or problems, so I am not sure to what extent *ipil-ipil* was used. Lastly, no one had any problems with *maligno* invading their house while I was living in Tugatog (although most people could recall an incident, either there or, more likely, in the provinces, when *insenso* had been used to cleanse a house of the Third Kind).

The following table lists a number of herbal remedies, available either for free in the elementary school garden, or at minimal cost through a local herbalist.

Illness Treated	Herbal Medicine	Part	Mode
Diarrhoea	Mangosteen	Leaves	
Stomach ache, insect bites, diuretic	Herba buena (*metha cordifolia opiz*)		
Stomach ache, coughs	Oregano		tea, poultice
Stomach ache	Damong maria		
Stomach ache, coughs, swelling, kidneys	Mansanilla (chamomile)		
Sprains	Tuba	Leaves	
Sprains, antibacterial	Mayana		tea
Coughs, antiviral	Lagundi (*vitex negundo*)		
Cough, fever	Alagaw		
Coughs, antibiotic, orbutic	Limalima (*scheffleria odorata*)	Bark, leaves	
Respiratory (increases strength of other preparations)	Sambong (*blumea balsamea*)		
Boils	Katakataka (*kalanchoe pinata*)	Dry leaves	poultice
Bruises, rheumatism, respiratory, stomach ache	Luya (violet ginger)		
Bruises	Along (onion)	Heated leaves	
Sores (esp. nails), ear infections (mixed wth coconut oil)	Niog-Niogan (*quiszalualis indica l.*)	Sap	
Kidneys (must be mixed with guava leaves)	Banaba (*lagerstroemia speciosa*)	Leaves	tea
Itchy skin conditions	Acapulco		
Pancreas, purifies blood	Giant ginger		
Warts	Labnob	Sap	
Fever, diuretic	Simbukulons		
Antispasmodic, antacid	Pandam		

Illness Treated	Herbal Medicine	Part	Mode
Cancer	Sambung	Leaves	
Low blood	Tanglad		
Low blood, insomnia	Makahiya		
Ulcers	Sabila (aloe vera)		
Menstruation, fever, headache, asthma, eye/kidney disorders, intestinal swelling	Sabila (aloe vera)	Juice	
De-worming	Lagundi	Leaves	
De-worming	Lagundi	Fruit	
De-worming, swelling, *rayuma*, eye disorders, fertility, kidney ailments	Tangan-tangan	Seeds	
Rayuma, blemishes	Pansit-pansitan		
Rayuma, cracked heels	Kalachuchi		
Multiple uses	Oregano		
Typhoid, sore throats	Saluyot		
Fever	Saluyot	Stem	
Fever	Rats' Ears	Dahon	
Anaemia	Saluyot	Leaves	
Bleeding of nose, mouth and bowels	Mango	Seeds	Crushed, applied to the site
Cuts, gas pain, menstruation, problems in milk production, sore eyes, fever, *rayuma*, gonorrhoea, snake bite	Lagundi	Seeds	
Coughs, phlegmy breathing, leprosy, fever, childrens' cholera	Lagundi	Root	
Malaria	Lagundi	Flowers	
Liver and ear disorders, *rayuma*, ringworm	Solasi	Leaves	
Swelling, scorpion sting, stomach ache, fever, diarrhoea, sprain, scalding, gum disorders	Solasi	Leaves	

Illness Treated	Herbal Medicine	Part	Mode
Menstruation, scalding, teething, cuts	Solasi	Root	
Haemorrhoids, headache, fever	Solasi	Leaves	
Menstruation, swelling, diarrhoea, haemorrhoids, blood enrichment	Bayambang	Leaves	
Cuts, coughs, ulcers, painful urination, appetite, rat bite, eczema	Bayambang	Root	
Chapped lips, restlessness, *rayuma*, cough, nervous tension	Berbena (Verbena)	Stem	
Leprosy, internal body cleansing	Berbena (Verbena)	Root	
Eczema, kidney pain, *rayuma*, cough	Kabling Lalake		
Nicotine substitute, fever	Kalachuchi	Leaves	
Swollen ankles, gonorrhoea	Kalachuchi	Young leaves	
Eyes	Kalachuchi	Juice	
Blemishes	Kalhanoy	Leaves	
Diarrhoea, malaria, gonorrhoea, swollen glands, measles, swollen throat	Bontot Pakol	Dried	

Hot Foods

Since many of the more common illnesses were caused by hot/cold imbalances (especially an excess of cold), many treatments relied on readjusting the bodily balance, usually through an intake of hot foods. Therefore, alcohol, dog, chilli and other recognisably hot foods were considered to have medicinal properties, but only when used to counteract hot/cold imbalances within the body.

Pharmaceuticals

There are a wide range of readily-available herbal remedies for common ailments which are both cheap and fairly reliable. However, by far and away the most often employed treatments for the more common illnesses,[99] such as coughs, headcolds, diarrhoea or cuts and their attendant possibilities of

infection [*impeksyon*] are the over-the-counter medications. These could be purchased at any pharmacy, and most *sari-sari* stores held a stock of the best-known medications. In many cases, people would purchase a few tablets or capsules to treat the particular illness, and then, if the symptoms abated, leave it at that. Since many of the pharmaceuticals for coughs and colds do not attack the infection, but merely mask the symptoms, people would continue to work because they felt that they had recovered.

The table on the following page gives a representative list of the medications which can be obtained at any *sari-sari* store. As can be seen, these are predominantly for treatment of diarrhoea, physical pain, headcolds and coughs. Although not included in the chart, medicated throat lozenges for the treatment of coughs and sore throats were also common, and were sold from every *sari-sari* store or by ambulant cigarette vendors.

I want to stress that, despite their greater cost, pharmaceuticals are more commonly-employed by Asogue Street residents than herbal remedies in home treatments. This tendency is partly due to perceptions that they are more convenient and more scientific or modern, more effective and faster-acting than herbs. Pharmaceutical advertising tends to promote such perceptions while simultaneously increasing consumer awareness of the products (see also Hardon 1991). However, the pharmaceuticals are purchased only in small quantities, as befits an expensive commodity.

Brand Name	Generic Name	Indications	Price Per Unit
Sumapen (500mg)	Phenoxymethyl-Penicillin	Antibacterial	P4.50
Penicillin	Benzylpenicillin Potassium	Antibacterial	P1.50
(Generic Antibiotic)	Amoxycillin trihydrate (250mg)	Antibacterial	P5.75
Aspilets (80mg)	Aspirin	Analgesic	P1
Neozep (forte)		Decongestant/Antihistamine/ Analgesic/Antipyretic	P2
Alaxan	Ibuprofen Paracetamol	Analgesic/Antipyretic	P4.75
Ponstan (250mg)	Mefenamic acid	Analgesic/Anti-inflammatory	P6.50
Tuseran (forte)		Antitussive/Nasal decongestant/ Antihistamine/Expectorant/ Analgesic/Antipyretic	P4.75
Decolgen (forte)	Chlorphenamine Phenylpropanol-amine HCL Paracetamol	Decongestant/Antihistamine/ Analgesic/Antipyretic	P2
Gardan (500mg)	Mefenamic acid	Analgesic/Anti-inflammatory	P4.75
Biogesic (500mg)	Paracetamol	Analgesic/Antipyretic	P2
Medicol (regular)	Aspirin Paracetamol	Analgesic/Antipyretic	P1
Cortal (500mg)	Aspirin	Analgesic	P1
Kremil-S	Hydrotalcite Dicycloverine Simethicone		P2
Immodium (2mg)	Loperamide	Antidiarrhoeal	P4
New Diatabs (600mg)	Attapulgite	Antidiarrhoeal	P3

Native Healers

When home remedies fail, or when the sickness is suspected to be one caused by the actions of the spirit world, then it is time to visit a native healer. A number of sicknesses can only be treated by native healers: in some cases, this is because they are not recognised as legitimate illnesses by Western medicine, in others, Western medicine is perceived by locals as being less effective against the particular malady. Often, whether or not a sickness must be treated by a native healer because it is not recognised by doctors, or because it does not recognise doctors (or some mixture of the two) depends on which informant is approached.

Healers may also be visited for fairly common complaints, such as *pilay* or hot/cold imbalances, if these display a fairly serious initial manifestation, or have become aggravated over time. In general, healers can treat most things which are not caused by *mikrobia* or poor hygiene/diet — some of these sicknesses are also susceptible to home remedies, and some are not. They may also have some skill in treating illnesses often treatable by other modes, especially if these are not serious microbial infections (which is widely recognised as being the province of Western medicine).

People recognise four types of native healer: the *albularyo* [herbalist], *manghihilot* [bonesetter/masseur], *hilot* [midwife] and *manggagamot* [which simply means "healer"]. As I had no opportunity to meet with *hilots*, they will not be discussed.

As their names suggest, the *albularyo* tends to specialise in herbal remedies while the *manghihilot* treats illness through massage. The *manggagamot* is a little harder to classify. To a certain extent, this type of healer specialises in treating illnesses caused by the spirit beings, or in combating sorcery. However, the term "*manggagamot*" literally means "one who heals" or "one who administers medication" (from the root *gamot*: "to heal", but the word is also the noun for "medicine"), so the term could be applied to any healer. Indeed, my Tagalog dictionary defines *manggagamot*

as the officially correct term for a Western-style doctor (although most Filipinos refer to medical doctors as *doktor/doktora*).[100]

Healing is not a full-time occupation for anyone who lived in the vicinity of Asogue Street, and I doubt that it would have been possible to survive financially on an income based solely on donations (healers are not supposed to accept payment for their services). Therefore, healers generally combine their calling with other, more lucrative ventures. In economic — if not vocational — terms, healing is a sideline. However, it is important to distinguish between those native healers who conducted consultations on a regular basis (and were known, first and foremost, as healers, rather than by whatever other profession they may have had), and those "amateur healers" who had few, or minor skills. The former are not professional in the sense of engaging in healing as a regular and lucrative profession; rather, others recognise them as having highly accomplished healing skills. For convenience, I refer to these as "professional healers". On the other hand, the amateur healers usually know a little about various techniques, particularly massage, but are not generally considered to be healers *per se*: they did not hold public consultation sessions or claim to have had the necessary visions which defines healing as a vocation — nor do they attempt to pass themselves off as being more powerful than public opinion believed them to be.

In the immediate vicinity of Asogue Street, there were only three professional healers: Mang Leno; Mang Isser and Aling Tess. There may have been others, of which I am unaware; certainly, my informants knew that I wanted to meet as many healers as I could, and none others were ever suggested to me. Mang Leno combined his work as a healer with full-time employment as a security guard at the local elementary school; Mang Isser worked as a masseur at the Manila *jai alai* fronton (a position which would have strengthened his claim to being a healing adept). I am unsure how Aling Tess made a living, although with several grown children, including a qualified *doktor*, she may well have been supported by them.

Further afield, there were a handful of healers who were known to be especially skilled or powerful, and people would travel to consult with them if an illness was considered dire enough to warrant it. Mar Gaurin led a peripatetic existence in Pangasinan, travelling from town to town; Vic — who was particularly knowledgeable about sorcery — lived in Tondo, a half hour or so away from Tugatog; and Mauritio lived on Panay Island.[101] Apart from these, I also met four healers in Pangasinan, two others in Manila, several spiritualist mediums and "psychic surgeons". Additionally, I heard about many more healers at second hand — those back in the provinces, in the old days.

There is a certain degree of correspondence between the broad natures of sickness suffered and the specific healer one should consult: since the *manghihilot* have knowledge of massage and the body's musculature and skeletal system, then they should be most effective in treating muscle damage, fractures, *pilay*, and the complications which arise from such injuries, particularly fever. Similarly, an *albularyo* should be able to effectively treat illnesses such as coughs, bronchitis, infected cuts, cysts or *maysakit sa katawan* (unnamed, systemic bodily sicknesses such as malaise), which are thought to be more susceptible to herbal remedies. If it is suspected that the sickness is caused by the actions of a sorcerer or, more often, the Third Kind, then one should seek out a *manggagamot*.

Such distinctions between the nature of the illness, its likely cause and the category of healer most likely to be able to effectively treat the sickness is reminiscent of the clear-cut divisions between the various specialisations found in Western medical practices. Although, in theory, it sounds just as neat as its Western counterpart, it does not work out quite so simply in practice. There is, on the surface, a clear-cut distinction between the various specialisations of native healer; however, these are not so sharply-defined in daily life. The specialisations really refer more to bodies of knowledge, rather than professional boundaries: someone may be described as an *albularyo* because they are known to have a great stock of knowledge which relates to herbal medicine, yet they may also be able to effectively

treat cases of spirit attack, or know enough about massage to cure run-of-the-mill cases of *pilay*. Healers are described as being of one or another category because of their perceived strongest knowledge base or their favoured treatment techniques, rather than on the strict professional boundaries which exist between, say, a dentist and a heart surgeon.[102] Furthermore, while particular modes of treatment apparently have affinities with particular sorts of illness or illness-causing agents, they are not mutually exclusive. A *manghihilot* can use massage to treat an illness caused by a *duwende* or herbal remedies can be effective in the treatment of *pilay*. In essence, then, there are sets of more-or-less discrete — but also rather porous — bodies of recognised knowledge which pertain to the healing arts: massage, herbalism and counter-sorcery.[103] An individual healer's knowledge or reputation may draw most heavily on one particular body; however, they are by no means necessarily excluded from knowledge of the others or of mixing them in order to diagnose or treat.

In the Philippines, the *hilot* or native midwife has been partially incorporated into the official public health programs, and may receive some training in Western midwifery practices (Pillsbury 1982:1827). As such, the boundaries between this healing specialisation and the others may be considered to be somewhat firmer; however, I lack sufficient data on this.

Healers are said[104] to gain their skills and knowledge through revelation. The standard story, which was repeated by most healers I spoke to, with only minor variations, is as follows:

> Before, the healer [if they were male] was a bad person. He would drink and womanise, gamble and never go to church. Eventually, he became sick, and came to death's door before receiving a vision, often of Christ or the Virgin Mary, almost certainly something recognisably Christian. They told him that he was to become a healer, and devote his life to caring for others. They agreed, for who can turn down God? And then they recovered from their illness. They would find that they had new powers and knowledge, although this might not occur all at once.

If the healer is female, the story is generally the same, except that they did not go through a period of perceived immoral behaviour. However, they would still receive a vision of the numinous, ordering them to take up their vocation as a healer. This is precisely what happened to Aling Tess:

> When she was in her early 20s, about 24 years ago, she died. Apparently she bled to death or needed a transfusion. She said she saw Christ, as though crucified, and then she recovered. Afterwards, she was able to heal her *pamunkin* [niece or nephew], who was very sick at that time. She didn't really want to be a healer at first — she was very slender in those days, but put on weight because of her healing abilities. She learned most of her abilities in dreams, particularly the massage techniques and knowledge of medicinal herbs. When she first started healing, her hands would become hot if she did not do it, and this still happens, sometimes.

In that vein, consider Taussig's (1987:447) remark that folk healers and shamans "...embark on their careers as a way of healing themselves." Further:

> The resolution of their illness is to become a healer, and their pursuit of this calling is a more or less persistent battle with the forces of illness that lie within them as much as in their patients...The cure is to become a healer. In being healed he [*sic*] is also becoming a healer. (*ibid*)[105]

Healers are seen as vessels through which healing power flows. This power may take the form of particularly effective techniques which are revealed to the healer in visions. Such "training by revelation" usually occurs at the beginning of a healer's career, but may continue throughout the healer's life. Generally, the visions are of one or more members of the Christian Trinity or of the Virgin Mary. The healer's power does not reside in the healer's body: it flows from God, from the divine, and the healer acts merely as a conduit for that power to act upon the sick. Just *why* a particular person should be chosen over any other to be a healer is an imponderable — they just were.

Of course, Mang Leno also received aid and advice from the *duwende* king who lived in the schoolyard; however, he admitted that the power for the healing ultimately came from God.

The ability to heal is supposed to come about through divine revelation, and healers are not thought to undergo any training or apprenticeship. It is a miraculously acquired, rather than meticulously learned, set of skills — which helps to account for the individuality of style and technique shown by healers. This said, it should also be pointed out that healing abilities are thought to run in families: most healers mentioned a father, uncle, elder sister or grandmother who was also a healer.[106] I suspect that, while no healer ever learned their trade through a formal apprenticeship, most learned at least some techniques simply through being related to a practising healer, by watching as the other person diagnosed and treated. In this informal manner, the techniques and knowledge (especially of curative plants) may well be passed on from one healer to another.

Since the ability to heal is a gift of the divine, it is considered very bad form for a healer to charge for his or her services. They have been chosen by God to help others to regain good health, and so should not profit from their ability. All healers whom I spoke to — and many non-healers — said that if a healer charged for their services, they would very rapidly lose the ability. Their gift (or burden) was not meant to enrich them, but to enrich others. Although healers do not formally charge for their services, they sometimes require clients to pay the cost price for any special medicinal plants that may be needed. If a patient cannot afford this, then the medicine is free. More commonly, healers accept donations for their services, which generally ranged from P5 to P50, while most people contribute about P10-P20. This is voluntary, and a pittance compared with the doctor's usual consultation fee of P75.[107]

While healers do not charge for their services, they believe that God will provide for their needs, as Mang Leno's story illustrates:

> When I became a healer, God said that I couldn't charge for it. He said that he would be the one to pay me. So I don't take money. My house was destroyed in the fire last May [which broke out in the squatter settlement behind the high school, where Mang Leno works as a security guard/caretaker].

> Everything was destroyed. But so many Filipino-Chinese who I'd treated brought me clothing, appliances, everything my family needed. Even a colour television set, when before I had a black-and-white one. And that's why I believe it when God said that he would be the one to pay me.

The Consultation

Healers generally consult in the early morning and early evening, usually at their homes. These are quite informal: one arrives at the house and asks if the healer is available. If they are, then the client goes in and is seen to by the healer, or sits down in the *sala* or perhaps on an outside balcony, and waits their turn. Although most healers said they felt they were obliged to see anyone who came seeking their aid at any time of the day or night, it is generally understood that healers prefer to receive patients in the early morning (this varies from healer to healer, but is usually between 7am and 10am), or in the early evening (between 5pm and 8pm). Healers have their own round of chores to perform during the rest of the day, just like everyone else. People will generally only visit a healer at other times if they feel the illness is serious enough to warrant immediate attention, and especially if the sufferer is a child.

It is commonly said that the best days for healing are Tuesdays and Fridays, that these are the days when a healer's powers are at their greatest. Every healer I asked denied that their power varied with the days, although they also said that the story might hold true for others.

> I have heard that Tuesdays and Fridays are the best days for healing, but I don't believe it, it's just because some healers will only accept patients on those days. I'm different: if someone is sick, they need treatment immediately, and I would not turn anyone away, no matter what. [Aling Tess]
>
> I've heard that, that some days are better than others. But for me, every day is just the same. My power doesn't change with the days. I don't know about other healers. [Mang Leno]

Their responses suggested that they subscribed to this belief (or at least acknowledged that it was common currency), but they felt that they themselves were exceptions.[108] Tuesdays and Fridays are thought to be

particularly charged days: not only healers, but also sorcerers, are at their most potent at these times. It is said that if one talks about a sorcerer on these days, they can hear it.

Why it should be these two days and no other that are particularly auspicious for healing and sorcery was a mystery to both my informants and myself. They agreed that these days were significant, but did not know why: it had always been that way; their grandparents had always believed so. One person thought about my question and, several days later, suggested that the potency of these days may be related to the Rosary cycle of Mysteries, which are based on the events of the Passion of Christ. When the Rosary is recited as a weekly cycle, it is on Tuesdays and Fridays that the Sorrowful Mysteries — the Scourging and the Crucifixion — are performed. My informant made it quite clear that this explanation was just his opinion, prompted by my questions about the potency of Tuesdays and Fridays.

Once it is the client's turn for a consultation, the healer will begin by diagnosing the illness, and deducing its probable cause. This may be particularly important if the sickness was caused by the Third Kind. Although they may claim divine guidance in diagnosis, the healer will usually ask the client (or an adult guardian if the client is a child) questions to ascertain the symptoms.

Consider the following description of one healer's home and a consultation:

> As the crow flies, Aling Tess's house is perhaps twenty five metres from Asogue Street, certainly no more than fifty. But to get there, you must go to the end of the street, turn right, and then turn left at the bakery on the corner. Follow this street for perhaps two hundred metres, and then turn left at the end into a narrow, dank alley. Keep following this until the concrete flooring is replaced by raised timber beams (at this point, it's necessary to perform a combination of jumping and climbing to get across the rushing water which separates the two). Follow this until you see a *sari-sari* store, and then turn left. A little further is a wooden gate, and beyond this is a tiny yard, its limits marked to the right and left by the walls of other people's houses. Beyond this gate is Aling Tess's house, which you

> reach by walking along the narrow wooden path set above the rubbish-strewn "pond" that is her yard.
>
> Inside, the house is a mixture of poverty and wealth: faded and peeling linoleum over wooden floors; a sofa with stuffing so tired one feels almost guilty at sitting on it; pictures cut from magazines, used as wall coverings; a small boy playing a Nintendo game on the very new television. Tess's son is a doctor, and it can only be surmised that these luxuries are past gifts from him. Tess, smiling, brown and very chubby in a floral-patterned dress, her grandson (playing the Nintendo), youngest daughter and a kitten.
>
> She doesn't waste time, asking only a few questions while my friend, Lando, removes his shirt. He has a painful shoulder, which has been troubling him for several days, so that now the pain is so intense he can't raise his arm up to his head. She rubs her hands in coconut oil and begins to massage his shoulder, working and stretching it at and around the point where the swelling is most apparent. She doesn't seem to have made much progress after about ten minutes, and tells Lando that he must return for further treatment. After putting five pesos in an urn, he tells me that he'll probably visit her again in about two weeks' time.
>
> On the way back to his house, Lando tells me that the shoulder first began to trouble him a few years ago, when he dislocated it while moving a ladder. He felt a pop, and since then the pain has increased, while the mobility in his shoulder has decreased. We stop at a house where a *tuba* tree (known for its beneficient properties in treating sprains) grows, and after asking permission [of the owner], pick some of the leaves. Lando said that Aling Tess told him to put the leaves on his shoulder — he will mix them with coconut oil and heat them.

Coconut oil is the standard lubricant used in massage. The oil may be blessed, or mixed with herbs known for their curative powers. Often, a crucifix or other religious icon is placed in the oil bottle to further increase its curative powers. The exact mixture varied from healer to healer, but the use of coconut oil as a base did not. It was also the standard oil used around the house for massage of tired muscles or aches and pains, although rubbing alcohol was also sometimes used.

Often, the healer will use prayer and/or a *tawas* to produce a full diagnosis. With prayer, the healer may be seeking help or guidance from God, or the prayer itself may be part of the healer's divinely-revealed technique. The *tawas* which the healer occasionally makes is more often

used to diagnose and help treat sickness in children, rather than adults. This is a different sort of *tawas* to the white powder mentioned earlier: this latter type of *tawas* is any object or prop which can be used by the healer in order to create a representation of the illness in order to aid diagnosis and treatment.

Although the following example comes from observing Aling Ebing, a healer in Pangasinan, it is typical of the use of *tawas* to make a diagnosis.

> A woman brought a child, an infant, to see Ebing. The healer took a candle that the woman had also brought, and burnt it in a back room, allowing the wax to drip into a bowl of water, while we sat under a verandah near her *sari-sari* store. When she returned, the wax shape vaguely resembled the right side of an infant, with a line running through the middle. She examined the baby's legs and ascertained that the right one was, in fact, shorter. Willy [my companion] was asked to verify this, and he told me that the baby had a fracture. She massaged the infant's shoulder, right side, neck, right arm and right leg. The child cried throughout the procedure.

Although Ebing took the candle away, other healers I have seen more often flick the hot wax directly from the candle onto a bowl of water in full view of their patients and any other bystanders. The shape of the wax helps the healer to diagnose the sickness, and also provides part of the cure: it should be placed under the patient's pillow and slept on. The wax image in the above example was taken away by the infant's mother — as part of the treatment it would be placed under the baby's pillow while the infant slept.

Mang Isser used a very different technique to obtain a *tawas*:

> His house is a grey, hollow-block structure in Bisig, overlooking the choked canal which, with its footpaths on either side, is the widest expanse of unused ground in the area. Three steps lead up to a wire cage containing his fighting cock and, next to the perky bird, a broken wire mesh screen door and, beyond that, the stout timber front door. Just inside is the *sala*, with three aged easy chairs, a laminated coffee table, a television and a picture of Jesus on the wall. Like all such houses, the floor is bare concrete, the walls crumbling grey hollow blocks, the ceiling a stained and buckled chipboard once painted white. Patients sit on the easy chairs, stand, or wait outside on the

> steps, away from the flattening light of the fluorescent tube set in the ceiling of the *sala*.
>
> Mang Isser approaches each patient in turn, asking them — or an adult guardian, if the patient is a child — a few quick questions. He says a few words quietly to himself, a prayer, and then makes the sign of the cross on the patient's forehead with the two fingers of his right hand that he has dipped in a jar of coconut oil. Then he takes a sheet of white paper and, pressing it against the patient's forehead with one hand, rapidly drags it to one side, so that the oil is smeared across the sheet. He holds this up to the light behind his head and, peering into it, makes a rapid diagnosis. The sheet is returned to the patient, who must sleep with it under his or her pillow in order to effect a cure. The patient thanks Mang Leno and places a few pesos into a jar on a sideboard, near the picture of Christ.

The most striking aspect of Mang Isser's diagnostic and curative methods was the use of a sheet of coconut oil-impregnated paper as a *tawas*. In watching him hold the translucent sheet up to the light, I was reminded of nothing so much as a doctor examining an X-ray.

It is not uncommon to see healers using techniques or behaviours which appear to be aping, or at least inspired by, those found in a Western medical setting. While Mang Isser's coconut-oil-and-paper "X-rays" were perhaps the most striking which I encountered, there are similar examples in the literature:

> His [Juanito Flores, the healer] assistant marks her [the patient's] body in several different places with a swab of moist cotton wool. Flores presses the thumb and index finger of one hand into the hollow of her knee, with the other he gives the first abrupt knock[...]
>
> Now it is my turn. Flores' assistant marks my body with the moist cotton wool. I can feel the healer's fingers through my shirt and a sudden stab of pain, more like an electric shock than an injection. Flores gives me six 'injections', but I feel the prick of his imaginary needle four times only.
>
> After having treated over twenty patients, Flores calls a young Englishman onto the platform[...] The healer pushes a sheet of white typewriting-paper under his shirt, waves his arms about wildly, takes the paper out again and regards it professionally. He has just made an 'X-ray'. (Chesi 1981:82-83)

Such instances of techniques which resemble Western medical procedure, especially within the clinic, seem obviously to be based, either consciously or unconsciously, on either actual observed behaviour, or drawn from watching popular representations of medical procedures through the mass media. I would hesitate to argue that these represent some form of politically-aware appropriation of the techniques used in Western medicine: this would suggest that the healers were attempting to retain clientele by evoking the forms and patterns one might encounter in a general practitioner's surgery. Since the healers do not operate on a profitable basis (although they do make a profit, it is not significant enough for them to subsist on the donations they receive), it seems unlikely that they would need to invoke practices which would make them appear more Western, more "scientific", and therefore more efficacious. It is widely understood that Western medicine is either incapable of recognising or treating many of the illnesses which require the services of a native healer (such as *duwende* attack); also, it is simply cheaper and more convenient to be treated by a healer, assuming that the various home remedies have proved ineffective (as in the case of *pilay* or fever).

Since there is little or no economic advantage to be gained by healers in incorporating practices reminiscent of Western techniques into their repertoire, why do they do it? I suspect that there are two reasons, neither of them explicated by the healers themselves: they appropriate the techniques of surgery and the operating theatre because these are effective and therefore powerful; and because there is a degree of status or cultural capital to be gained in their use.

Healers heal. That is why people visit them. Regardless of a healer's reputation, appearance or behaviour, if they do not "deliver the goods", then they will rapidly lose their clientele (of course, the reputation and behaviour of a healer are not unimportant). A healer can only be seen to be actually effective in the role of a healer if the audience — the people in society — is convinced by a reasonable ratio of successful healing to number of people treated. What constitutes a "reasonable ratio" is hard to quantify, since it is

essentially a qualitative factor, the extent to which individual patients or their kin, friends or workmates feel that there has been an at least partially successful treatment of a particular malady. A healer is only as good as his or her most recent treatment, although a perceived large number of successful treatments will usually offset the bad publicity of a few failures.

In order to heal, healers must be able to use techniques which not only have some degree of physical therapeutic value, but which are also emotionally and intellectually satisfying: they must work within a set and system of symbols which are understood by the healer, the patient and the audience (Lévi-Strauss 1963). The healer uses techniques which are recognised to be effective because they are traditional, or because they were revealed by God to the healer, or because they are also used by the scientific Western medical system. Just as essential as any physical therapy, the emotional/intellectual therapy consequent upon use of these techniques to symbolically — and publicly — re-define the patient from one of "afflicted" to "recovering/recovered" is part of what the healer is aiming to achieve, although they themselves might not recognise this in so many words.

According to Bulatao (1969, but see also 1986), Filipinos operate on two symbolic "levels", a mental "split-level personality":

> The top level is made up of words and concepts borrowed from the West...though perhaps endowed with different meanings and apperceptions. The lower level is that of the native culture apparently unaffected by the veneer of Westernization. Furthermore, the two have not met each other in a real encounter, and it is only now and then that there is a weak attempt to try to reconcile the two by simple rationalization. (Bulatao 1969:299)

The lower level is that of belief in the spirit world, of Christian belief and of what is perceived to be "tradition", handed down from (perhaps) pre-Spanish days. At the same time, Filipinos recognise the potency and accuracy of Western thought:[109] not only because they are taught in schools and via the mass media that to be "scientific" and "progressive" are absolute goods, moral imperatives in their own right, but also because they can point to the dominance of their own country by Western powers, the Spanish and the

United States, which suggests an inherent superiority of allegedly Western modes of thought over allegedly indigenous or traditional modes.

Although Bulatao's argument may be a little extreme in its delineation of a neat binary opposition, within the context of sickness and healing there is among informants a perception of two main groupings of symbols, techniques and understandings: that of Western medicine, and that which is, for want of a better word, more "traditional". Of course, these are not completely mutually exclusive, and most informants saw no contradiction in using either in what they believed were appropriate or practical ways.[110] The key here is that the two models — Western and traditional — are not completely incompatible, at least as far as informants are concerned. It is quite legitimate to use Western techniques — or what appears to be Western techniques — if these can be turned to good account in the therapeutic process. Since Western medicine is an aspect of powerful Western science — or "progress" — it can be usefully tapped, just as God's healing power can be: and even if Western medicine does not recognise the illness or its cause, the techniques (or the symbolic representations of these) can still be used by those in the know to treat the malady.

Additionally, healers may use Western-inspired techniques in order to accrue cultural capital: after all, the *doktor* is a symbol of science, of progress. I was told on a number of occasions that healers were invited to treat patients at the hospital, or received patients who had been referred to them by a doctor. Whether or not this actually happened is not nearly as important as the enhancement that a healer's reputation can acquire through such claims of partial recognition by the Western medical profession. I suspect that these statements were as much for the benefit of those around us when I interviewed the healers as it was for me. Perhaps the healers took the risk that I would not publicly challenge them and, by not doing so, indicate tacit acceptance of their claims — another strategy to enhance their reputation and thus increase their store of cultural capital.

Occasionally, an illness would be untreatable by any of the more common means. Since Filipinos were at times blighted with illnesses which

were not susceptible to the treatments of native healers, and were also unrecognised by the Western medical profession, there were times when it was necessary for them to make a trip to see one of the healers of great renown. During my fieldwork, this occurred twice:

> Don is a ten-year-old boy who developed a hard, black lump on his inner thigh. This gradually grew until it was roughly the size of a man's palm; completely out of proportion to his thin legs. His parents took him to an *albularyo*, who diagnosed it as being caused by a *duwende* which Don had offended. The *albularyo* outline a course of treatment, which had no effect. Although very poor, his parents decided to take him to a hospital. He was given a variety of tests, including X-rays, but the doctors were unable to determine what was wrong with him.
>
> In desperation, his parents decided to take him to see a healer in Panay that they had heard of. He and his father were away for several weeks, and when they returned, Don's limp had largely improved, while the black lump appeared to have grown smaller. Every night they placed a poultice of herbs purchased from this healer on Don's leg and forehead. A few weeks later, Don's father returned to Panay with some of Don's clothes: the healer is reputed to be able to work his healing power at a distance, if unwashed clothes are presented to him.[111] Within two months, the leg had completely healed. The lump had been caused by a *duwende* which Don had kicked when he was playing.
>
> Maria, an elderly woman who hailed from Pangasinan but lived with her grown daughter in Manila, suffered a bad fall while visiting her home in the provinces, and injured her hip, making it impossible for her to come back to the city. I suspected that her injury was not as bad as it was represented, because it was well-known that she preferred to be in the province, where she had most of her family, as well as friends she had known since childhood. However, it turned out that she really was too ill to return: she had been waiting for the healer Mar Gaurin, who travelled around Pangasinan, Zambales and Tarlac, to hold a clinic near her home and when she received word of his impending visit, went to see him.
>
> I was able to watch this healer, who combined psychic surgery-like intrusion and extraction techniques with a massage in which he pressed a crucifix into the afflicted area of his patient. When the cyst, infection or diseased matter rose to near the surface, he placed his hand under the large metal cross and "removed" the item. He removed matter from fleshy

> areas, but also from the bony parts of ankles, a woman's eye and, in one case, a swollen (and obviously painful) testicle.

It should be remembered that at almost all times the consultative process is a public procedure: people sit together waiting for their turn to be diagnosed and treated (Jocano 1973:72; Lévi-Strauss 1963). If there is enough room for all those waiting to be seen, then they wait in the same room or area in which the healer consults, and it is only if there is not enough room here that latecomers will wait in another room or outside the house. The only exception to this rule is if the healer or patient feels that the sickness and treatment may be of such a nature as to possibly embarrass the patient in front of a mixed-gender group of bystanders (that is, if it invoived baring genitals or a woman's breasts). On these occasions, the healer usually takes the patient to another room, or a small section of the usual consulting area is cordoned off with a sheet.[112]

Apart from the infrequent cases where a healer treats *in camera*, they and their art are on immediate display, not merely to the patient, but also to the audience of clients and their companions (if any). These people are just as much representatives of society (and so carriers of word-of-mouth publicity, whether that be complimentary or not), as they are clients seeking treatment for their own ailments. It is to convince these people, *qua* representatives of society, just as much as the specific client, that a therapeutic process has successfully occurred, that the healer must put on a good show. And a good show should be both physically fulfilling, in that it provides some measure of relief or therapy, and emotionally/intellectually fulfilling, in that it speaks to (if not actually conforming with) ideas of what a healer should traditionally do and say. Of course, therapeutic and theatrical elements can be drawn from anywhere, particularly Western medical procedures, if these promise to be of some use, or are disclosed to the healer through revelation.

Although healing is a public, and therefore social, activity, it is necessary that the healer both convince others that he or she can heal, *and* also that she or he does possess some sort of healing power of expertise,

which itself may or may not be a function of the ability to convince others. To paraphrase Neu (1975:287), if everyone believes that *x* is the king, then he *is* the king, since his powers are primarily social. However, in the case of a healer, *y* is not a healer merely because everyone believes that she is, since there are certain conditions which hold or do not hold — such as healing ability — regardless of whether or not people believe them. However, *y* may still hold the title of healer if there is a community consensus regarding her powers: she may become a healer in the eyes of the community because she has healing power, or she may in some way acquire the ability to heal because people believe that she can heal, or (more likely), it may be that there is an interplay between consensus, ability and her confidence in her own abilities.

After the Healing

Patients do not necessarily gain immediate relief from symptoms (although this may happen in cases of spirit possession): the healing process which follows initial treatment is not particularly rapid, and may require numerous visits to a healer. This depends, in part, on the specific ailment suffered: in some cases, the symptoms can be cleared up almost immediately, but the underlying sickness must heal at its own pace and the patient is advised to convalesce with a greater or lesser degree of latitude in the sorts of activities they can perform. Instant cures are not expected by sufferers — it is only after an extended period of non-improvement (the period in question depending upon the type of illness and the patient's expectations of the course of treatment) that people will contemplate changing to another healer or mode of treatment.

Just as the Tagalog root word *sakit* encompasses both the concepts of "pain" and "sickness", so too was the distinction between "symptom" and "sickness" not clearly defined by informants. Relief from the former was generally considered to be synonymous with a cure for the latter, so that people often turned to over-the-counter medications to treat illnesses which could also be treated by herbal medicine or native healers — the purchased preparations, particularly for coughs and colds, tended to mask symptoms,

rather than effectively treating the sickness which was the cause of those symptoms.[113]

Part-timers

Apart from those individuals who have a reputation for healing knowledge and skill, and have set themselves up with a consultancy and somewhat regular hours, there are a number of people around Asogue Street who are known for their possession of a particular talent. These amateur healers do not hold regular consulting hours or receive patients; rather, they can be called upon in an emergency or at short notice for help if the problem is not too severe or if it is too inconvenient to go and see one of the more regularised healers. These others, then, are more-or-less in the same position as someone who has knowledge of first aid — they possess a useful skill when it is needed, but are not known primarily for that skill.

In most cases, these are people who have learnt some massage techniques, and can be called upon to act as a *manghihilot* should someone suffer minor neck, shoulder or body pain.

Aurora is the science teacher at the nearby elementary school. Apart from her duties there, she is also keenly interested in the Western-recognised medicinal properties of the healing plants commonly used as home remedies. She maintains the school's garden of some of these plants,[114] which are available to anyone who needs them.

Senny, one of my neighbours, suffered a relapse after touching cold things. She had given birth only a few months before (and was thus liable to suffering relapses caused by hot/cold imbalances). She was visited by Aurora, who treated her.

> The science teacher brought her a variety of herbs from the school garden, one to help her bring up phlegm, and another to dry out her sinus passages.[115] Senny was told to wash the herbs three times in water, and then a fourth time in salty water, and then to wash them again in fresh water. This will remove any dirt or bacteria. After this, she is to drink it every night as a tea.
>
> After Aurora had given her the herbs, she gave Senny a massage. She told her not to take a bath or go near cold

> things, to take only sponge baths, and that her infant child would become sick because she was feeding it breast milk while she was sick. The bacteria could transfer from the mother to the child through the milk.

Following the treatment, Aurora admitted that she knew how to heal because her grandmother had been a healer, but also because she had been given the gift from God. She had to use her talent, as God had given it to her. At the same time, she liberally mixed terms, so that a sickness recognised as being caused by a hot/cold imbalance (the relapse) was also indicative of the presence of a bacterial infection, which could cross to the child. Again, she explained that massage, *hilot*, was simply the local term for "acupressure". As a combination of traditional healer and elementary school science teacher, it is not surprising that she mixed ideas in this way, forming a viable and — to those involved — intellectually and emotionally satisfying explanation of the sickness and cure from a variety of elements. In this case, Aurora employed a diagnostic technique and a range of curative practices which were derived from a bricolage of local and "scientific" or "Western" ideas.

Aurora's explanation would hold great weight with Senny because Senny is also a teacher at the school. A science teacher and healer, Aurora has the authority to define and explain the illness, while as a colleague, she has the necessary trust.

Although most healers, like sorcerers, are made (albeit through revelation) and not born, there is one type of healer who, like the *manguusog*, is born with a particular skill. This healer is always, and only ever, an individual born as a breech birth, and has the innate ability to clear small bones obstructing the throat of a sufferer by massage. This is a fairly useful skill in the Philippines, where fish is the most common protein source,[116] and children tend accidentally to swallow fish bones fairly regularly.

Occasionally, where a sickness has been caused by an offended representative of the Third Kind, a healer may outline a course of treatment which involves an offering to mollify the angry being. Known as *alay*, it

involves the sacrifice of a black pig, some of the flesh of which is eaten by the participants, while the rest is left for the spirit.[117] Although the *alay* is reputed to be fairly common in the provinces, the last one performed in Tugatog was held a few years prior to my fieldwork, when a workmate of one of my neighbours suffered a bout of unexplained welts and scratch marks that appeared while he was asleep. A healer diagnosed a case of spirit attack, and ordered the sufferer to hold an *alay*.

The *Doktor*

Should a native healer's treatment fail, or should a sickness be identified as being better treated by the Western medical profession, then people have no alternative but to visit the *doktor*, the clinic or the hospital. Each of these is staffed by a Western-type health professional and it is those which are free (the *barangay* health centres and public hospitals) which are the most often consulted (Lamberte 1995:390; Jimenez 1986:163-164).

Unlike native healers, the *doktors* are more aware of their calling *qua* profession. Whereas the boundary which separates healers from non-healers is ill-defined and porous (with plenty of room for part-time practitioners), there is a strict, and strongly-policed, dividing line between medical professionals and the laity. In part, this is to protect the public since medicine is a highly-skilled profession and errors can be fatal to the patient; however, this is also to protect the *doktors*' incomes: while they may have to compete with each other for a market share of the available sick people, they aggressively ward off any challenges to their professional province from cut-rate "charlatans" or "quacks" (but see Smith 1991:201-204).

This helps to explain the prevailing attitude among *doktors* towards native healers and the ailments which they can treat (and which Western professionals cannot): they are both hostile to, and dismissive of, the healers and the illnesses supposedly caused by sorcery or the spirits. Such illnesses are liable to be discounted as merely "superstition". These superstitions show the depths of the ignorance of the *doktors*' co-nationals, who supposedly have not had the benefits of extended training in the sciences.

However, there have also been attempts to incorporate traditional midwives and possibly herbalists into the official health care system (Pillsbury 1982:1827).

A visit to the *doktor* is vaguely reminiscent of attendance at a healer's home. Admittedly, there are differences: the *doktor*'s consulting rooms may not be part of the house in which he or she lives; however, it is just as likely that it will be operated from his or her home. Whereas the native healers are spread throughout Tugatog, operating from their homes or places of employment, the half-a-dozen or so consulting rooms are clustered on the main road to the immediate north of Sangandaan market, in easy reach of the pharmacies (also known as "drugstores" or "*botica*") there. Just as in any Western consulting room, there is a bifurcation of space, between the public waiting room, hushed and rather dull with fresh newspapers and old magazines, and the doctor's surgery, where there is a heavy desk, littered with the paraphernalia of medicine, from notepads bearing a pharmaceutical brand name to the doctor's nameplate.

The walls feature posters decrying the dangers of smoking, or the life cycle of tapeworm — these have almost (but not quite) completely replaced the religious and family pictures that would be in their stead in a healer's home. One does not need an appointment to see the doctor — it would be impossible for people to make appointments when there are so few telephones — everyone arrives during consulting hours and waits their turn, just as with a healer.

I was never privy to a consultation by a doctor with a Filipino: my main experience of their practices turns upon those times when I was so unwell that I went as a patient.

Although the official attitude of the Philippine medical profession to native healers and folk concepts of sickness is one of hostility and disquiet at the degree of credulity displayed by their co-nationals, at least one local *doktor* had a slightly more conciliatory view.

> I don't believe in the spirit beliefs here, although I think that the faith healers [i.e., native healers] may have some beneficial

> effect, if you believe they can help you. But if you don't believe they can help you, even the best doctor in the world, let alone a faith healer, won't be able to help you much.
>
> I don't believe that the healers are trying to trick customers, get money for a sham. I think there is some element of truth in what they do, but not much.

This doctor's main concern with the native healers was that local people tended to visit them before going to a doctor's surgery. If they were suffering from a serious ailment, particularly typhoid or tuberculosis, it was unlikely that native healers would be of much help to them, and by the time they came to see the doctor, the disease was well advanced and both difficult and expensive to treat.

Although a consultation with a doctor and some pharmaceuticals were available at the Tugatog health clinic for minimal or even no cost, people felt that the place was not to be trusted. Medicines were only available for sale, when they were available at all, because — it was rumoured — the staff sold the free pharmaceuticals on the black market or kept them for their friends. The doctor there told me that his pharmaceutical supplies were never enough to meet demand, and therefore he had to keep them for distribution to the very poorest of the poor, with the result that most visitors to the clinic were not given free medicines (see also Becker *et al* 1993:87-88 on a similar situation in Cebu).

Whereas the doctors in private practice are largely involved in curative, or "reactive" medicine (that is, treating people who have already fallen sick), the doctor and associated health professionals at the Tugatog municipal health clinic are more actively involved in a variety of preventative medical programmes. The *Libreng Sangkap* nutritional and polio vaccination project has already been mentioned. In addition, the clinic runs family planning classes, prenatal and postnatal care classes, tuberculosis and other acute respiratory disease testing, and monitors for gastrointestinal sicknesses (including dysentery and cholera). It maintains contact with the three known cases of leprosy [*ketong*] in Tugatog, and also administers the various free immunisation projects for infants (diphtheria, whooping cough,

tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, hepatitis-B and measles), when vaccines are available.

Other Healing Sources

Apart from the more commonly-encountered native healers and *doktors*, there are a number of other healing practitioners which are occasionally encountered in Manila. In certain ways, these were quite peripheral to the more "core" practitioners (the native healers and the Western medical profession), partly because they were not to be found on an everyday basis, and partly because healing was not necessarily their primary aim, but rather a subsidiary one. Of these practitioners, this thesis will examine the *El Shaddai* movement, since some Asogue Street residents were adherents and regular attendees at meetings. In terms of their impact on the daily life of the people in Asogue Street, they are certainly not as important as the native healers or the hospitals. This section will also introduce psychic surgeons and the *Espiritas*, since both provided role models for several of the Asogue Street healers (and more powerful healers were often members).

Faith Healers: El Shaddai

The *El Shaddai* movement is a lay organisation that operates within the orbit of the Philippine Catholic Church. In this, it is effectively the same sort of organisation as the Legion of Mary or the Knights of the Southern Cross. Such movements exist with the blessing and approval of the Catholic hierarchy, their purpose being to revitalise the faith of the laity or to provide a particular mode of, or outlet for, various forms of religious expression. These forms of religious expression may include charismatic worship, pre-Vatican II liturgical observances, or youth-oriented groups. Such movements are to the regular laity what religious orders are to the "secular" priesthood.

El Shaddai emphasises faith renewal and healing within the framework of a charismatic, revivalist theme, similar in many ways to the evangelism of middle American preachers.

> On Sunday evenings, thousands of people from all over Manila congregate at Luneta Park, near the city centre. They have come from all over the city, with blankets, picnic dinners and faith, to attend the regular meetings of the *El Shaddai* movement. From mid-afternoon, people begin to arrive and are ushered to the seating areas on the grassed semi-circular amphitheatre by polite, smiling attendants dressed in white.
>
> In late afternoon the meeting begins. On a floodlit stage a choir leads the crowds in hymns or entertains them with songs of praise. Men and women preach to the audience in the best North American Bible Belt tradition about *El Shaddai* — God, the God Who Is More Than Enough — about His love for humanity, about Heaven and Hell, salvation and damnation, healing and sickness. Interspersed with the songs and the emotional sermons are testimonials delivered by rank-and-file members of the movement: telling us how *El Shaddai* has changed their lives through the healing power of prayer.
>
> In addition to the thousands in the audience in the park, the Sunday evening meeting of the *El Shaddai* movement is being watched in households across the city and across the country.
>
> At around 8pm, Brother Mike Velarde, the founder and leader of the movement, comes on to the stage to preach to the, by now, primed and expectant audience. He is here to lead the faithful, to tell them (in his impeccable English and Tagalog) how *El Shaddai* saved him and turned his life around, and how God can help others. *El Shaddai* can bring the faithful peace, health and the promise of salvation. As the evening progresses, there will be revelations, speaking in tongues and the promise of healing.
>
> Brother Mike is a charismatic, electrifying performer. He has presence, an ability to hold the attention, and sway the emotions, of the audience stretched out before him.

El Shaddai is a revitalisation movement, almost a sect within the Catholic Church in the Philippines. It is an officially recognised lay organisation within the temporal structure of the Catholic Church, a distinct but organic part of the Church. It promotes religiosity and acceptably Catholic family values. One can be a Catholic — as most Filipinos are — without identifying oneself as a member of the movement; however, to be a member of *El Shaddai*, one must first be a Catholic.

Despite its status as a movement within the Catholic Church, *El Shaddai* displays a number of characteristics reminiscent of the (particularly North American) televangelist scene, which itself has drawn on the tradition

of the boisterous tent-preaching evangelism of mid-Western Bible Belt American Protestantism.[1'8] There is the same appeal to good old-fashioned family values, the same emphasis on a return to the Bible, on a simplistic morality where good and evil, right and wrong, are drawn in black and white. There is the same indifference to deeper theological questions, the same hostility to relativism and liberal humanism. At the televised Sunday evening meetings, it is the congregation's emotions, rather than their intellects, which are engaged through song, glossolalia (speaking in tongues), the presentation of highly emotional testimonials to *El Shaddai's* power by average members, and some potently rhetorical preaching from a variety of evangelists — not just Brother Mike, although he is by far the most charismatic and electric.

El Shaddai draws its justification and explanation for the healing which followers report from biblical, rather than indigenous Filipino, sources:

> Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick. (James 5:14, 15)

The biblical injunction lends credence to the belief that God will heal the faithful through the congregation or church elders. This "laying-on of hands" is most apparent at meetings of charismatic, pentecostal or other revivalist movements, which tend to emphasise the more emotionally immediate aspects of "primitive christianity", that is, christianity as it was supposedly experienced prior to its institutionalisation in the first century or so after Christ's death.

Although *El Shaddai* draws in an obvious manner upon the healing tradition within Christianity, and seems to be much more closely aligned to that tradition than to the beliefs and practices which apparently underlie "traditional" Filipino healing, there remain parallels:

> At the meeting which I attended, Brother Mike told the congregation of how he came to found *El Shaddai.* He said that he was once a very wealthy man, and used his wealth to lead a debauched life. Eventually, he fell ill with a life-threatening

> disease. While in the hospital, he was given a vision of the Virgin Mary, who told him that only God could cure his sickness, and that he should turn to *El Shaddai*. Additionally, he was told to start a movement to bring people closer to God.
>
> According to Velarde, it was this revelation, and his subsequent turning to God, that led to a complete cure. He then began to preach, gradually gathering around him a small band of followers that has, over the years, grown into the *El Shaddai* movement, which now has branches throughout the Philippines, and members in Singapore and Hong Kong.[119]

Although similar stories are told by evangelical preachers the world over, Brother Mike's story is also reminiscent of those that native healers recount in explaining how they came to be healers, how they acquired their healing gifts. Like Brother Mike, most went through a low point in their lives, brought about by some vice, whether that was drinking, gambling or drugs. Like Brother Mike, during the nadir of their existence, they were visited by a representative of the numinous: usually the Holy Spirit, Mary or an angel. And, like Brother Mike, they were given a mission to help those around them, to act as a vessel for God's saving or healing powers. Just as with the local healer, Brother Mike claims to be no more than the vessel through which God — *El Shaddai* — works. And it is through him that God can heal the faithful.

In Asogue Street there were only a small number of members of the *El Shaddai* movement: Con Ching, her married daughter, that woman's husband and their family. According to them, *El Shaddai* could, and would, answer one's prayers for healing and health. This did not occur exclusively at the *El Shaddai* meetings, but they implied that it was better to go there, perhaps that it was more efficacious if one's prayers were uttered while Brother Mike was on stage. According to Con Ching:

> You must stay away from sinful sins, like smoking, drinking, swearing, breaking your promises to God and others. If you attend the meetings with requests for God, these will be granted, if your heart is pure and you believe that God will help you — if you have faith. You must be patient, the requests will be granted if you are patient, they do not come immediately. This is because so many people are asking. I prayed for Robert [her son] to get a job, and within one month he got

> placement on a ship. Then I prayed that he would be happy and make good friends, and I got a letter from him, saying that he was happy in his work and had made friends.

I was told that minor illnesses were often cured simply by attending the meetings and believing that they would be healed: colds; influenza, back ache and diarrhoea were all susceptible to God's healing powers there and then, and I was told that, occasionally, more serious illnesses were also cured in this way. One could even "capture" these powers in suitable reservoirs, such as the *El Shaddai* prayer cloths (about the size of a large handkerchief with prayers printed on it —these are held up, facing Velarde, during the final prayer session) or by holding up eggs. We ate the eggs after the meeting as a way of ingesting God's goodness: after all, eggs are the Christian symbol of rebirth and resurrection.

In the case of the prayer cloth, members of the congregation told me that these acquired healing powers while they were displayed at the Sunday meeting. Such cloths could be rubbed on to injured parts of the body to speed up the healing process or provide relief from pain. The use of cloths as reservoirs of holy power is not limited to *El Shaddai*. I have seen people rub handkerchiefs or tea towels against the statue of Jesus on the Road to Golgotha which is kept at the Quiapo Church, and on the statue of the Virgin Mary at Manaoag, in Pangasinan. In both cases, the statue is reputed to have miraculous — especially healing — powers. However, it was only at the *El Shaddai* meeting that I saw the cloths being held up to a person, albeit one who was charged with being the vessel through which God's power was thought to flow.

Although not germane to my thesis, the *El Shaddai* movement is a good example of a religious movement which draws heavily on the symbols of healing in order to win converts. Are you sick? Then come to *El Shaddai*, pray for healing, and you will be healed. And just as *El Shaddai* can heal the sicknesses of your body, so too can He heal the sicknesses of your soul. It provides the believer with the hope of salvation after death, and the fortitude to continue in this world.

Mike Velarde *is* a healer, although he is foremost a preacher and the leader of a successful and growing movement within the Catholic Church in the Philippines. The story of how he came to found the *El Shaddai* movement, of having reached the lowest ebb of life and then been given a mission by God, is the same story that one will hear from any healer in the Philippines. At the same time, it is the story of many modern evangelists, and not-so-modern ones.

Unlike most healers, Brother Mike does not take centre stage. Generally, a healer's position at the theatrical centre of any healing performance leads to an easy confusion between the healer and the source of the healer's powers. Healers always claim that their abilities come from God, that it is the divine, and not they, who *really* effect the healing. However, the performance of healing, the techniques employed, usually take centre stage, and it is only possible to discover the alleged source of the healer's knowledge and power afterwards, by asking them. By contrast, it is an integral part of Velarde's technique, on televised centre stage, that any healing effected is performed as an act of prayer, or worship, so it is the purportedly divine source of any cure that is repeatedly brought to the audience's attention. Even more common are the testimonies of those brought up on to the stage to tell us (interspersed with bellowed "amens" from Velarde and the choir) how *El Shaddai* has healed them or saved their lives or marriages or wayward children, because the witness prayed for help. On the stage of the *El Shaddai* gathering, the emphasis has shifted from the healer with God as a kind of battery, to Brother Mike as an almost passive conduit — although one armed with a microphone — showing the audience God's power to heal sicknesses and lives. It may be significant that the cures have usually been effected offstage, some time before the Sunday evening during which they are displayed.

Faith Healers: Psychic Surgery

Since the 1970s, the psychic surgeons, or "bare-hand healers"[120] have received a great deal of publicity in the international media, for their reputed ability to perform therapeutic acts — to heal — in a manner which closely

resembles the performance of an operation, but without knives, anaesthesia or aseptic conditions.[121]

> Jun Labo's Nagoya Inn clinic is just outside the cool hillside town of Baguio, known colloquially as the "summer capital of the Philippines", because it is the main destination for Manila's wealthy and powerful when they leave the latter city *en masse* in the hot season. All the taxi drivers know where the Nagoya Clinic is: for years, they have taken countless tourists along that winding, crumbling mountain road to the walled hotel-residence-clinic where Labo plies his trade.
>
> One of the most famous healers in a city renowned for them, Labo was elected mayor of Baguio, but was initially unable to take up office because, apparently, he had forsaken Philippine citizenship when he married an Australian woman. He is now married to Yuko, a Japanese who has learnt psychic surgical techniques from him.
>
> The taxi stops in a large courtyard and, from here, the visitor goes down a flight of steps and into the clinic, which occupies the lower levels of the building. Past corridors lined with shelves displaying an immense variety of herbal remedies lead into a large antechamber. One wall of this antechamber is adorned with pictures of Christ, statues of the Buddha, and, in the centre of the wall, is a painted triangle, point uppermost, within which is a depiction of an eye.[122] Surrounding the triangle are rays pointing outwards, as of light. This antechamber or chapel is where the hopeful, the sightseeing and the merely curious — Europeans and Asians, Americans, Canadians, Australians, Germans and Japanese — wait while Labo prepares for the healing session which will follow.
>
> The room beyond the antechamber is partitioned, a central area with smaller cubicles, large enough for a table laid with a sheet, in each. Labo is in one, Yuko another. We strip to our underwear, a line of vaguely embarrassed foreigners who have come for healing, for the experience, or merely to have a good story to tell back home. The first person in line lies on the table, the cameras start to whirr and flash, Labo, flanked by two burly attendants, seems to be praying to himself, a large picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus behind him. Is he in trance?
>
> The actual surgery is incredibly rapid. He runs his hands over the patient's body, as though sensing where the person's malady is located. He is said to be able to sense one's sickness without the need to ask. Then he massages the person, at the chest or stomach or shoulder, his fingers disappearing into a rapidly-appearing pool of red liquid that, we are led to believe, is the patient's blood. Within seconds, one

> hand appears to vanish into the patient's body. Of course, that is what we expect to see, and it is entirely possible that Labo's hand is merely forcing the skin, fat and muscle slightly inwards, his hand masked by the red pool.
>
> His hand comes up, holding a piece of biological matter that could be a tumour, a cyst, diseased flesh, or a piece of chicken entrails. This is dumped unceremoniously into a bucket near Labo's feet (due to bad publicity, Labo does not allow extracted material to be taken away for analysis), the patient is sponged off, and their place is taken by the next person in line.
>
> Although Labo operates on a strictly donation-only basis, many of those who come to Baguio seeking his treatment find it convenient to stay at the inn above the clinic. On my way out, I saw him selling watches to a group of Japanese tourists.

Neither Labo nor any other psychic surgeon claims that their techniques will lead to miracle cures. According to Alex Orbito, another of the best-known psychic surgeons:

> Sickness is sin. It is caused by a person's departure from the spiritual laws. To be healed, one must ask forgiveness for his sins and this requires a strong faith to do. (Licauco 1981a:96)

There are no guarantees, and people who visit the clinic must expect to attend many sessions before they may expect to experience any relief — if they get any relief at all. What constitutes "many sessions" may vary: in my short time there I met people who were convinced that Labo was not able to heal, but still they found that their various afflictions — arthritis, cancer — had improved; there was less pain and more mobility. In my own session, Labo apparently removed stringy matter from my chest, which he claimed was a calcium build-up, which would have caused me sickness later (psychic surgery can be preventive as well as curative). At the time I had a headcold, but received no treatment for this.

Whether or not psychic surgeons are able to really open up a patient's body with their bare hands, remove tumours, cysts or "sick" material (calcium build-ups, for example) and then re-seal the body without leaving a scar or running the risk of post-operative problems is beyond the scope of this thesis. Similarly, whether the healers have any statistically significant impact on the courses of the illnesses of those people who receive their

ministrations would be a very difficult matter to ascertain, and not an area which I even attempted to explore while in the field. As with other aspects of healing and sickness-causation, my interest is primarily whether people believe that such things occur, not whether they *really* occur in any rigorous, statistically-provable sense.

Psychic surgery has very little to do with the residents of Asogue Street. It is something they have heard of, but are unlikely to see occur, unless a particular native healer chooses to incorporate such techniques into their repertoire, as occurred in Novaliches, a municipality to the north of Malabon:

> The healer, Rodito Piodos, operates from an empty garage below his house. At one end is a table with a sheet laid across it, and pictures of Jesus and Mary. Near the entrance is a low bench where people sit, awaiting their turn, below a mynah bird in a cage. There is a desk, with a sheet of glass laid across it. Under this sheet are pictures, face up, of him performing psychic surgery. Near the operating table is a lit candle, which he passes his fingers over, blowing on them and onto the patient, and praying. He does not perform psychic surgery on all of those who come to see him, in many cases he simply uses massage.
>
> A woman patient has an ailment affecting her neck. After much praying, he seems to drive his finger into her throat. She gasps and blood wells up around the finger. He rummages around "inside" her throat with the end of his finger, and eventually "removes" a small, fleshy lump which his assistant told me was a goitre. A piece of cotton that he apparently inserted into the wound had disappeared. After the surgery he held his hand over the area of the operation, and then applied some cotton wool and a purple poultice, which was his own mixture.
>
> My companion, Chris, told me that he wasn't impressed. He said the blood did not look fresh.
>
> Piodos told us afterwards that he came from a family of healers, including his father, uncle and brother. He started when he was seven years old, after suffering from an unexplained paralysis in his legs for one day. His prayers come to him as he is praying, a kind of revelation, although he would not tell me who or what he thought was revealing the prayers to him. The first time they came, it was "like a nightmare".

> A woman awaiting her turn said that she visited the faith healer because she had nothing to lose. She knew there was no guarantee that she would improve.

This healer was unusual in that such techniques, involving the invasion of the patient's body with a hand or finger to remove diseased or foreign matter, are exceptionally rare outside of psychic surgery.

My neighbours in Asogue Street were fascinated by the photographic evidence I presented to them from my own visit to Labo's clinic. Since two of the pictures showed myself being operated on, they demanded to see my abdomen so that they could verify that there was, indeed, no scar. This lack of any concrete evidence that I had been operated on was taken by some to indicate that the healers were a fake since (regardless of the impossibility of a human being using his or her bare hands to enter another's body through the chest, or of my surviving such an experience) the wounds would not have healed in the week or so since my visit to Baguio. Others remained uncertain, but no one accepted the veracity of the psychic surgeons' claims to possessing extraordinary powers, at least not on the basis of my photographs.

Several people suggested to me that, based on the large number of European and Japanese being treated by Labo in my pictures, it was merely another example of a Filipino tricking foreigners into emptying their wallets.[123] Unlike native healers, with their greater emphasis on doing God's work and not profiting from their skills, psychic surgeons — despite their claims to the contrary — follow closely Hagey's (1980) definition of "post-traditional healing entrepreneurs": innovators in the field of Philippine healing who intend to reap a profit.

Psychic surgery appears to have grown out of healing practices not uncommonly found in the province of Pangasinan, central-west Luzon (Hagey 1980:105). Just as Siquijor or Samar-Leyte are considered to be the homes of the strongest sorcerers, or Capiz is believed to be the home of the *asuwang*, so too is Pangasinan the home of the healers. It is from this province that the strongest or most powerful healers are thought to hail, and it is here that psychic surgery apparently began.

The first publicised account of psychic surgery dates back to 1948 when Eleurio Terte began healing by the removal of items, initially foreign matter and then biological material, from the bodies of patients (McDowall 1993:18). He may have inspired or taught the first of the most famous psychic surgeons, the late Antonio Agpaca, who is considered to have been the mentor of both Labo and Orbito. Terte's daughter, Arsenia de la Cruz, a healer in Baguio, has publicly stated that, unlike her father, the more recent psychic surgeons are charlatans, unable to truly open the body of the sick.

It is entirely possible that Terte married indigenous healing techniques with surgical procedures. Perhaps he was able to watch surgeries performed by the United States army in 1944-45, during the U.S. re-invasion of the Philippines via Pangasinan.

Psychic surgery is an aspect of Filipino healing which, at its extreme end, caters almost exclusively to the wealthy and to foreigners. Although there are a few exceptions, it lies beyond the quotidian for the residents of Asogue Street, and is more a subject for disbelieving gossip than as a viable avenue for healing.

Espiritistas

The *Union Espiritista ng Pilipinas* [Union of Philippine Spiritualists] is, as its name suggests, primarily a spiritualist organisation which draws on the practices and cosmology of spiritism as formulated late last century in Europe and North America (Schultz 1989:58-59, but see also Velez 1977) — a similar form of spiritism has been reported among Puerto Ricans in the United States (Ness and Wintrob 1981). Although the organisation does not, to the best of my knowledge, draw on indigenous concepts of the spirit world, it does conduct healing through mediums who act, while in trance, as conduits for spirits.

> The *Espiritistas* [as they are more commonly known], maintain a chapel in Barangay Kangkong, perhaps a half an hour's travel from Tugatog. The chapel is decorated with five-pointed stars and paintings of doves (a symbol of the Holy Spirit). Men and women are kept segregated throughout the meeting — the men sit on one side of the chapel and women on the other. I

was told that this was because a passage in the Bible required men and women to be separate while they were at worship.

At the beginning of the service, one of the chapel's "resident" mediums — there are four in all — began praying at the table or altar at the front of the chapel. This intense praying continued until she appeared to enter a trance-like state. I was told that she had gone into trance because this was the way in which one became a vessel for the Holy Spirit to speak and act (particularly, to heal).

Mediums are not always possessed by the Holy Spirit: it is also possible to be taken over by an "unclean spirit". These can always be recognised because if they are asked by bystanders to open the Bible and turn to a particular page, they will not be able to. Further, unlike the Holy Spirit, unclean spirits cannot recognise what is in a person's heart.

Once the medium had gone into trance, she was passed a Bible. She opened the book seemingly at random, and named a variety of passages, which were written on a blackboard beside her by the congregation leader. After she had finished, and was recovering from her trance, people were chosen by the leader to come to the stage and deliver short homilies based on the biblical passages.

The *Espiritistas* maintain links with a variety of healers, particularly psychic surgeons, and many of the better-known surgeons are current or past members of their organisation.

Although most of my neighbours in Asogue Street had heard of the *Espiritistas*, there was even less contact with them than with *El Shaddai*.

Shopping Around For Healing

Once an individual becomes sick, it is necessary to ascertain the correct course of treatment to ensure recovery, if recovery is at all possible. To say this is not to say anything new: it is exactly what happens with sickness anywhere. In order to determine what is the correct course of treatment, the sufferer and those around her or him rely on a set of guiding principles, and it is these principles which vary from time to time, place to place, and culture to culture.

Initially, the patient has to identify the exact nature of the illness; to name the symptoms which they are experiencing. The illness can be

identified through tradition, in that people know a variety of culturally-recognised symptoms and concomitant illnesses, simply by growing up in a particular society. Experience is also a great teacher, since that which has occurred in the past is likely to occur again: if I have a sore throat and a blocked nose, then — because I have contracted head colds in the past — I will tend to diagnose the occurrence of such symptoms as indicating a head cold. If I can identify the illness, then I can also most likely identify its probable cause, which will also suggest a number of possible avenues for treatment, since illnesses which are recognisably caused by the spirits or *mikrobia* will be most susceptible to being treated by the *manggagamot* or the *doktor*, respectively.

Apart from the knowledge gained through socialisation and reinforced by living within that society, and the knowledge gained through experience, there is also the advice and opinions of those around the patient, their peers. Such people will have their own opinions or predispositions, gained through socialisation and experience. As individuals, they will each have their own, perhaps slightly differing ideas and interpretations of experience and tradition. These differences may be even more marked in a place like Asogue Street, where peers draw on the traditions and practical knowledge of a variety of different places and cultures within the Philippines.[124]

In some cases, it is necessary to know the likely cause of an illness in order to determine treatment. This is not always the case — on a number of occasions, people simply did not feel well [*maysakit sa katawan*] — what are usually unexplained aches and pains, with no necessarily apparent cause, can often be effectively treated by massage. Generally, though, whether an illness has been caused by sorcery, the Third Kind, *mikrobia* or a hot/cold imbalance will tend to suggest the likely course of treatment.

Once the likely nature and name of an illness has been found, then there may be a number of options with regards to treatment. If there is more than one possible avenue, then the patient will usually seek the cheapest option: that which costs the least and is, secondarily, the more rapid. However, there are exceptions and people do occasionally choose speed of

treatment with little regard for the cost. Should the patient be a child, then people are far more willing to spend more in order to ensure their children's recovery, while adults are more likely to just "grin and bear it" where the cost of treatment is known or feared to be too high. It is also cheaper to buy a handful of antibiotics than visit a doctor.

In a number of cases, it is simply not known what an ailment might be. When this occurs, experience suggests that the unknown sickness may well have been caused by spirits, and so they will visit a native healer, whose diagnosis will tend to support the suspicion (in my experience, unknown illnesses are usually caused by spirit attack). Of course, a few dissenters put little stock in native healers or reports of spirit attack, and will tend instead to visit a doctor or the clinic; generally, these individuals are slightly better-off financially than most people in Asogue Street. Additionally, certain *mikrobia*-related illnesses are so rare that people are generally unaware of their true nature: few people would be able to correctly diagnose cholera or typhoid.

There is a recognisable process at work in the identification of an illness and the best course of action with regards to that ailment, and this is based largely on tradition, experience and the likely cost or speed of effective treatment.

There are a number of ailments that are commonly encountered, almost on a weekly basis, and these are the ones which are most readily-diagnosed and treated. Head colds, influenza, minor problems resulting from hot/cold imbalances, coughs and *usog* are all so common as to cause little comment. They are generally considered to be minor nuisances (although it is recognised that *usog* or the flu can develop into serious, even life-threatening problems). *Usog* or hot/cold imbalances are treated in specific ways, either through a visit to the *manguusog* who caused the illness or by the ingestion of hot foods and the avoidance of cold elements. For the other minor illnesses, which are generally respiratory, sufferers take plenty of water and buy a handful of over-the-counter preparations from *sari-sari* stores.

Although there are a number of traditional herbal treatments for many of the most common respiratory illnesses, and these are available for *gratis* from the elementary school grounds, I rarely heard of anyone actually availing themselves of this. I suspect this has more to do with the perceived efficiency of the preparations available from the stores: expectorants and cold formulations are very effective at masking symptoms, producing the illusion of rapid recovery. Most people recover from minor respiratory and ear-nose-throat infections within a few days, although they may suffer from several over the course of a year, and so the purchased formulations appear effective in that they hide the illness until the sufferer's body has beaten off the infection.

Treatment of dental problems are generally avoided as far as possible, and many adults had either seriously blackened teeth, or were missing several. Children tend to eat a lot of high-sugar junk food, with predictable results; however, adults told me that it was usually not worth their while to take children to the dentist for tooth complaints, since the first set always fell out anyway.

If an illness is not recognisably minor, or is a normally minor illness which has taken a more severe form, then patients will usually visit a native healer. Additionally, if a supposedly minor illnesses develops complications despite treatment, the sufferer will seek out a native healer. Not everyone goes to visit the same healer for the same sickness, and some people will take themselves off to a *doktor's* surgery instead. However, a visit to a healer was the most common step if home remedies failed, or if the illness was initially recognised as falling outside the parameters of those which were best treated by home remedies.

The choice of which healer to visit was guided by a number of factors. Firstly, there were only so many native healers who operated on a regular basis within walking distance of Asogue Street: Aling Tess, Mang Leno and Mang Isser. Others could be visited by jeepney, although this was rarely done. Additionally, the various healers were known for specialising in particular areas of healing lore: Tess was an *albularyo*, Leno a

manggagamot, and Isser a *manghihilot*, so that, in theory, Isser would be a better healer to consult for *pilay*, while Leno should be seen for unrecognisable illnesses (which would most likely be caused by spirit attack).

In theory, people choose a healer depending on which techniques were most efficacious; however, the choice of healer was not made on tha basis. Far more important was the individual's preference, based on their perception of the healer's attitude and ability: their reputation and the experiences the individual patient had already had with that healer. Thus, people told me when I asked them why they were going to see A instead of B: "I don't like B's attitude", or "I don't think B knows what they are doing — I don't believe they have any ability". Perceived specialisations were much less important in the choice of a healer than that healer's ability (based on perceived past success ratios) and their personal qualities. It is this latter which relates most directly to a healer *qua* vessel of God's healing power: only a healer with a good nature or attitude [*ugali*] could reasonably be expected to be acting as a conduit for such powers. Those who did not impress patients with having a "good attitude" could not have been chosen by God to heal; therefore, they had no true powers and were merely quacks, charlatans.

Whether or not a particular healer was seen as having a good attitude and the requisite skills varied from person to person, depending on individual experience and preference. To an extent, sufferers would visit Mang Isser more frequently than the others for treatment of *pilay* (especially if the sufferer was an infant or small child), and as school caretaker Mang Leno was well-placed to treat the fairly regular cases of fright and spirit attack (possession) which occurred in the elementary school grounds, thanks to the presence of *duwende* and a White Lady there. Otherwise, the three healers lived about a similar distance from Asogue Street (Aling Tess was a little further than the other two): none lived in Asogue Street itself, so distance was not important in people's choice of healer.

Although some ailments could be cured by the healer immediately or within 24 hours (particularly if the client was given a *tawas* to sleep on), there were also occasions when treatment required a number of return visits. If, after several consultations, a client felt that they were not improving, or were deteriorating, they would then seek out another, more powerful healer. Alternately, they might then visit a doctor or go to the public hospital. The more powerful healers were not to be found with ease near Asogue Street: Vic, who had special talents in treating sorcery, was in Tondo, between 30 minutes and an hour away by jeepney. Such a trip would not be undertaken unless the would-be client had received no relief from the neighbourhood healers, or suspected from the outset that it was a problem which the nearby healers would not have the power or expertise to treat.

The most powerful healers lived far away from Asogue Street. People did visit them, but since the two with which I am best acquainted were in Pangasinan and on the island of Panay, to see these was a major undertaking, and so something which would not be done before every other possible avenue had been explored. Thus, if a patient had visited the neighbourhood healers and received no satisfaction, it is at this point that they would usually contemplate visiting a *doktor*.

Doktors are expensive, and they are also visited only for the most dire of illnesses. If home remedies and native healers have failed, then the sickness is most likely something serious, which may entail expensive antibiotics or — even worse, financially speaking — a stay in hospital (on this, see Decaesstecker 1975:59). Cancer, typhoid, tuberculosis, leprosy: it is these ailments, and others which are as debilitating or life-threatening, which are treated by the doctor. People fear these diseases, because they can kill or waste, leave someone a cripple or an invalid, because they are so expensive to treat that to contemplate such a thing is almost impossible.

Of course, there are other illnesses which are caused by *mikrobia* and are much less serious: these are not so feared. Additionally, individuals were occasionally plagued with chronic illnesses. Many of these could be attributed to the deterioration caused by ageing, yet they would still be willing

to seek out medical treatment or the ministrations of the more powerful healers, if there was any perceived chance that these might be of benefit to the sufferer.

Informants rarely had recourse to visit doctors or go the hospital. Barring severe injuries, most illnesses were either treatable with home remedies, or by a few visits to a native healer. Most of the time, then, illnesses were effectively little more than nuisances, minor debilitations at worst.

Should an individual display symptoms to an ailment which they suspected would be best treated by a *doktor*, and which they guessed would require a long and expensive course of therapy, they were more likely either to ignore the problem (in the hope that it would go away, or that something would turn up, a monetary windfall), or to seek out the best healers they could. In one case, a woman developed a lump behind her ear which, following its onset, proceeded to grow rapidly. She said that she didn't want to see a doctor, because she was frightened that it might be something really bad — although neither of us used the word, we both suspected that it was cancer, a malignant tumour.

Although there are many exceptions, based on knowledge/experience, on symptoms and on personal preferences, the sick follow a specific pattern in seeking treatment for their ailments. Initially, they will use home remedies in an effort to combat the sickness. Should these fail, they will visit one or more native healers, beginning with their preferred, usual therapist. Following this, they will make use of the treatments and therapies offered by Western medicine. Should all of these fail, they will seek out the greatest healers that they know of. This is likely to be the most expensive option, at least initially, given the distances required to visit them for a consultation. I cannot say what people might do if this last option fails: I never heard of such an event. Perhaps, as when people cannot afford the *doktor* or the hospital, they simply accept their lot and suffer.

Chapter 6: Distance and Danger

Sickness and its sources are related to what I believe is a fundamental aspect of urban living in Manila,[125] which is the perceived relationship between distance from the here-and-now and danger. Essentially, the expected risk, or apprehended danger, increases the further away one travels from one's immediate, daily surroundings, or the further back one goes into the past. Although I have most strenuously related this increased perception of danger proportional to distance with the likelihood of encounters with more powerful and therefore potentially more dangerous varieties of the Third Kind, it can also hold for more mundane sources of danger, such as possible sources of physical violence.

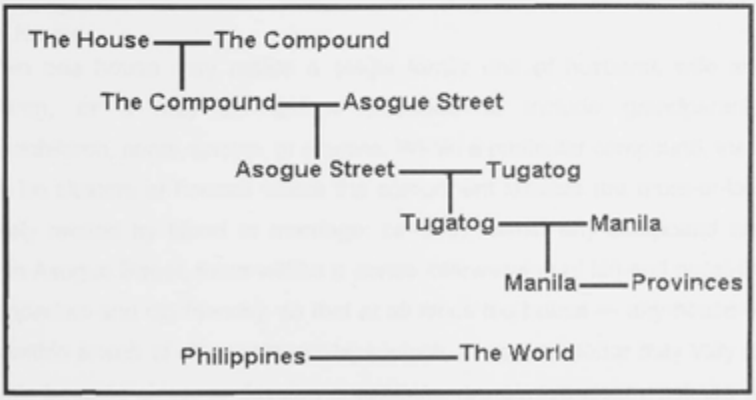
Not only does the expected danger from the Third Kind or from people of ill intent — such as *magnanakaw* [thieves], *mandurukot* [pickpockets], or drug addicts — increase with greater distance from the home, it also increases at night, in deserted places, or during special occasions. These occasions may be the ritually-charged Tuesdays and Fridays, when sorcery is at its most potent, or at New Years' Eve and Christmas, when thieves are expected to be out in force, attempting to make extra money to buy gifts for their own families.

Note that, while the expected danger from both mundane causes and the Third Kind increases with distance and on special occasions, because they are fundamentally different sources of danger, they are identified with different special occasions and different degrees of distance. The Third Kind are believed to be prevalent in the provinces, but thieves are thought to abound in Manila, especially in the business district of Makati, which is physically much closer to Tugatog. On the other hand, to most of my informants, the most distant provinces could be conceptually closer because they had kin in those places and could visit them or had originated from there, while for most people, Makati may as well have been on the far side of the moon, for all the contact or business they had there.

The next section outlines the various zones which can be considered to make up a "cultural geography" or "conceptual geography" for most people in Asogue Street. I want to stress that this is my construct, based *post facto* on my field notes, rather than on discussions in the field. However, I feel the pattern may follow to some degree a non-explicit model which most of my informants would recognise. It should also be stressed that there are many causes of danger or sickness vectors which undercut or belie the following model; particularly illnesses caused by *mikrobia* or hot/cold imbalances, and the reputation certain areas near Asogue Street had for being "tough".

From Here to Eternity

One way to consider the zones of Asogue Street residents' conceptual geography is as a series of binary oppositions. Each opposing pair is separated by a frontier, on the far side of which is territory considered to be relatively more unfamiliar to an Asogue Street resident. In other words, the family house is relatively more familiar than the immediate precincts or the compound, and both of these together are relatively more familiar (and so relatively safer than) Asogue Street itself, and so on. The following diagram represents these opposing zones.



Above: A schematic rendering of the categories of the world paired by relative levels of familiarity.

In the zones closest to the household, the frontiers between opposing zones are under the tacit but recognised surveillance of particular people who, by virtue of their geographic location and method of livelihood (especially *sari-sari* storekeepers or individual householders and maids), are able to watch who comes into or out of specific compounds, the street, or individual houses. The further away one goes from the house, the more diffuse and indistinct are access points, and where these are known to be policed, this function is performed by government officials.

Prior to any of the conceptual zones based on geography, such as the house or the street, there is the body. Ultimately, it is the body which is the target for all external attacks, and perceived danger is effectively the perception of some sort of threat to the body. This "body" may be an individual's own physical existence — the body corporeal — or it may refer to the body or bodies of loved ones, especially kin, spouses and children: the body familial. In the final analysis, sickness induced by sorcery, the Third Kind, hot/cold imbalances or *mikrobia* are attacks upon a body, a breaching of the final lines of defence. Perceptions of possible danger are bound up with movements of spirits or sorcery from outer zones to the body, or of the movement of the individual's body to outer zones. Apart from the body, the closest zone is that of the house.

The House

Within one house may reside a single family unit of husband, wife and children, or it may be further extended to include grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, or cousins. Within a particular compound, there may be clusters of houses where the component families are more-or-less closely related by blood or marriage: certainly, within any compound and within Asogue Street, there will be a dense interweaving of kin and quasi-kin (*kumpadres* and old friends), so that at all times the house — any house — lies within a web of close relationships which, while their tenor may vary as people become closer or develop antipathies, are always clearly defined as being the type of relationship which defines an ally. You might not like your

brother, or you may have had a quarrel with your nephew's wife; however, these are the people to whom you can turn in a crisis, and whom you are obliged to help in times of trouble.

Within every house that I entered, there was somewhere an alcove or section of wall set aside for the display of religious items. This shrine might be as simple as a few pictures of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary cut from magazines or calendars, with a plastic cross stuck to the wall near them; or it might be quite elaborate, with framed representations of the Bleeding Heart of Jesus, the *Sto Niño*, religious tea towels, electric candles and rosaries. It is tempting to describe these religious alcoves or shrines as the spiritual or metaphorical centre of the house (certainly, they were never at the physical centre); however, I rarely saw people pay too much attention to their shrine, except once when a family prayed the rosary, kneeling before it. Otherwise, it was only when I asked about it, or a new item was added to the display, that people took much notice of their shrines. Certainly, the kitchen, meal table and television set were more often the foci of attention.

Surrounded as it is by a network of friendships, kinships and patron-client bonds, the house is notionally the safest place, a space where the Third Kind do not penetrate. While *maligno* can, in fact, enter houses if they are not protected, this is an uncommon event. *Maligno* are not normally to be found within the house, their "natural" place is at some remove from it. Of course, while such things "naturally" occur beyond the front door, they may be able to enter abodes; when this happens, it is certainly a hot topic for gossip, but not considered to be some sort of reversal of the natural order.

About the only common danger to be found within the house is the floor. When inside, it is common practice to wear a pair of slippers, since the floors of hollow-block houses are of concrete (occasionally of raw earth). Cold can travel into the body from the floor, causing a hot/cold imbalance, and thus lead to sickness. Otherwise, the interior of the house is not considered to be especially dangerous.

As one might imagine, there are a host of prohibitions and symbols which are attached to the threshold between the house and the world.

Mostly, these apply to the front door; however, they may also be applied to windows or to the back door (in those rare houses which have such a thing). Generally, windows are filled with slatted glass louvres behind a steel cage or steel bars, and it is thought highly unlikely that anything much bigger than a lizard will come in or out through one. Whether or not it is possible for the Third Kind to enter through a shut and barred window is another matter.

Often, a visitor to a house in Asogue Street will see coins embedded in the concrete near the front door, just outside the house. These are usually fixed in the front step or, if there is none, into the wall itself at about ankle height. Such coins are said to be good for bringing money into the house, and this is a practice I encountered virtually everywhere I went in the Philippines: either a few coins embedded near the door, or the depression where the coins had once been (before they had been prised out by persons unknown).

> When I commented to Toto that there were no coins near his doorstep, he said that he didn't believe in such superstitions: they were not scientific. Later on, he admitted that, when the concrete for the floor just inside the door had been poured, he had mixed in a few coins.

The presence of coins near the door is meant to facilitate the movement of money — wealth — into the house. Likewise, fruit is used during the New Year period to try to ensure ease and comfort for the coming year.

> During New Year most houses had a bowl of fruit laid out on a table in the house. All the fruit was round, such as oranges or *kalamansi* or apples. I was told that there should be 12 different sorts of fruit, one for each month of the coming year. The fruit had to be round, globular, since this looked fat, like a full belly [or perhaps a pregnant woman]. Such round fruit would, hopefully, ensure that the coming year was also round or fat: prosperous. In addition to the round fruit on the table, one household hung out a bunch of grapes wreathed in cotton wool outside the door and outside the window which overlooked the entrance to their family compound. Again, the round grapes would hopefully ensure a fat and prosperous new year, while the softness of the cotton wool should attain for them an easy twelve months. This was one of the poorer families.

Virtually every house I went into at this time had a bowl of fruit laid out, while a few repeated the exercise a few months later during the Chinese New Year celebrations.

> Both the poorest people I knew and several tradespersons told me they were looking forward to 1995, which in the Chinese calendar would be the Year of the Pig: a year of prosperity, round and fat like a well-fed pig.

As can be seen, the threshold between the house and the outside was an area of demarcation, an area which could be acted upon to promote the entry of certain elements (such as luck or prosperity) — again, candles were placed outside some houses on the night of All Saint's Day (November 1), to show to the spirits of the recently-dead that they were welcome to visit the house of their kin — or to attempt to bar the entry of unwelcome entities. In line with this, crosses were sometimes drawn onto the front door: this was thought to help repel any *maligno* that might wish to enter and cause harm to the inhabitants.

Since activities performed around the threshold had an adverse or helpful effect upon the interior and its inhabitants, chores and tasks which involved the movement of things into and outside of the house sometimes carried prohibitions as to when they could be performed, especially if this was on ritually dangerous Tuesdays and Fridays:

> One should not sweep dust out of the house on such days. Should a black butterfly enter the house, it means that one of the inhabitants will soon die. If a brown butterfly [rarer than the black] should fly into a house, it means that money will come. If a cock crows at midday, it means that an unmarried young woman is pregnant: people will wait to see who it is. If a dog howls at night, it means that there will be a death in the family or in the neighbourhood. Do not stand near a doorway if there is a pregnant woman in the house, it will mean a difficult delivery. Don't cut hair or fingernails at night, spirits can enter through the cuts.

Such prohibitions and precepts were not often observed by my neighbours. Few believed in them, and those who told me about them said that it was

really something that their parents or grandparents had believed, back in the provinces.

The Compound

Most houses open onto a compound which runs off the nearest street. The houses of wealthier people have their own courtyard (over time, relatives may move onto the property and build their own small dwellings in the courtyard, creating another family compound), while the residents of the shanty areas tend to be a rabbit-warren of narrow alleys between houses and rows of houses. In Asogue Street and most of the neighbouring streets, compounds made up of houses belonging to kin and close friends were the norm.

Especially during the day and early evening, but to an extent at all times, the compound is like a commonly-held extension of everyone's house. If the weather is clement, it is the usual place for men to drink, for women to talk, for the laundry to be done, for children to play together. It is also the locus of most of the strongest inter-household relationships, which are constantly strengthened and maintained through the observance of ordinary and extra-ordinary interaction (these may also be allowed to decay through non-observance). These interactions are the little rituals of life — the social niceties — which have no necessary significance beyond themselves and the fact that they *are* (or are *not*) done.

> For various reasons, a household may have reason to celebrate which is not significant enough for a large gathering — this is more likely if the family is very poor. On such occasions, such as a child's birthday or perhaps the man of the house has obtained a job, the family will prepare a large amount of food, the particular meal being related to the reason for the celebration: *pansit* [noodles] for a birthday (*pansit* symbolises the hope and promise of long life, both for the giver and the recipient), or *kaldereta* or *kare-kare* [both are kinds of stew] for most other occasions. The food is ladled out into bowls and given to neighbouring households: the givers should ensure that every neighbouring household receives some of the meal, even if only a tiny amount. What is important is that no one is forgotten, and that everyone partakes.

Neighbours and those known to the compound's inhabitants walk freely through the compound, visiting: strangers sometimes also enter, but they will be very closely, if covertly, watched. *Duwende* may inhabit sections of the compound; a well or the underside of a house. Yet these spirits rarely cause trouble. White Ladies and *duwende* may be encountered here, but they do not seriously obstruct the average person's day-to-day existence. While the Third Kind should always be treated circumspectly, and with respect, these are not the most malevolent that could be met.

Late at night, the compound is much less safe. People are at home, in bed or watching television, and anyone — but especially thieves — might make their way into the dark, shadowy areas between houses. It is unlikely that one might encounter any of the Third Kind which are up to no good, but they are known to prefer deserted (even temporarily deserted) places; so it is at these times that one is far more likely to run into the White Lady, who prefers to be abroad at night. Of course, there are no *asuwang* or *kapre* to be found in Manila; however, it is always possible that, if the White Lady is about, then other, more expressly malevolent, spirits may also be roaming — and people have been known to run afoul of such creatures, even in broad daylight while surrounded by one's friends.

The Street

The street — particularly Asogue Street, but this can apply to any residential thoroughfare — is the place where the residents of the various compounds meet. It is a social world, where strangers sometimes pass and youths play basketball. If the house is private, and the compound is semi-private (a place where anyone may go, but where ordinarily only residents will be found), the street is the public arena. Although street drinking is technically illegal, men will drink here, women will stop to talk, and children will play with their neighbours. It is a place for young men and women to stroll in (usually) single-sex groups, surreptitiously watching the folk in the other groups, male and female youths shyly observing one another. It is the place to sit in the shade next to a *sari-sari* store, to gossip with other customers or the

proprietor, or simply to watch the world go by. It is where things *happen*, public things, and it is a space which belongs, more or less, to everyone (see also Jocano 1975:39). This is not a truly public space, since outsiders may not use it freely; effectively, it belongs to the residents of Asogue Street because they are the prior occupants.[126]

The street and places close by, such as shops and markets, can be considered to constitute the *kapitbahayan* [neighbourhood]. This is the area beyond which an individual's familiarity begins to drop off rapidly, although there are of course isolated, more distant places where an individual is known. Asogue Street is essentially a *kapitbahayan*, although this might also include some parallel streets, parts of the squatters' settlement and even parts of Bisig.

At night, it is a different story. After about 8pm or 9pm, the street is all but deserted. The stores are closed, people are at home or drinking in the compounds. Strangers who are out on the street at this time can have no conceivably innocent reason for being abroad. Like the nearby schoolyards, the street is a dangerous place, where a White Lady could easily be encountered. As with any geographic space, public or private, the perceived degree of danger increases at night — this is the time when people are most alone, when one's friends have gone home and, being alone, people are at their most vulnerable. Things may lurk in the shadows, and the family or the *barkada* are not nearby to help if there is trouble (although, of course, they are not so far away that they could not be roused fairly quickly).

This perception that at night deserted places are more dangerous than during the day has a basis in empirical experience. While trouble can occur any time, it is most usually during the night that killings occur, since victims tend to be alone, without companions. And it is also the time that the spirits are at their most active: *asuwang* and *kapre*, *maligno* and *multo* generally tend to travel about when the sun has fallen below the horizon.

Further Away: the Barangay *and Manila*

Beyond the immediate area of the street, which is known to and inhabited by everyone, there are regions which are considered to be somewhat more

dangerous, but are more-or-less readily accessible to the younger men and, to a lesser extent, older married men. Women rarely go to these areas, unless it is on pressing business. Many of them do not mix with people beyond their street (except for workmates, whom they would rarely, if ever, visit), and the concerns of household chores and the family tend to keep them from moving too far away from their house and its immediate surroundings, except to go to Sangandaan Market to buy provisions.

Women are housebound for two reasons. Unmarried ones, the *dalaga*, remain indoors to help with the household chores if and when they are not working in an office or factory. These are "good girls", who show by their absence from the world, which implies a hard-working presence in the home or the compound, that they will make good wives and mothers. Marriage is, in general, their aim — as it is usually, but not always, the aim of the young men who court them. Their chastity is assured, at least in theory, by the fact that they are rarely, if ever, seen outside their homes or home compound, and almost never out on Asogue Street. Where a married woman has steady work, it is her husband who will remain housebound to do the chores and keep an eye on the children. It is only on singular occasions that such men stray much beyond their home compounds.

The areas near Asogue Street — the squatters' settlements, Catmon, Bisig and Sangandaan — are sometimes frequented by younger men who wish to make and maintain friendly relations with others of their age-group (or are courting), or more infrequently by married men who wish to visit the *barkada*-mates of their youth. Men and women will also have friends and kin further away but still in Manila: these people may also be visited but, due to the difficulty of travel in that city, such visits usually occur only on special occasions: baptisms, weddings, deaths, fiestas.

The Provinces

Apart from areas where one is known, where one has family or friends, the provinces are also dangerous: the danger lies in the greater number and variety of the Third Kind to be found there. Many types of Third Kind prefer the isolated or deserted places and so are thought to be far more

prevalent in the countryside. I was told countless times that "there are no *kapre* [or sorcerers, or *asuwang*] here, but there are many in the provinces." Particular entities or practitioners of sorcery are thought to be more populous in specific provinces; however, they could all be found somewhere or anywhere in the provinces, even if they could also be found in Manila (such as *duwende*). And the perceived danger from the Third Kind increased at night, when there were no people out in the fields or among the copses.

Although people could, and did, travel to other places, particularly provinces where there were kin or there was work to be had, the provinces were considered to be far away; people who went there were beyond the horizon, so to speak, and were hard to contact. One did not regularly speak with one's parents or aunt in the home province, and letters were almost as infrequent, often written only when there was pressing news.

If the provinces were far away, then they could also be considered "long ago". Few adults that I knew had actually spent more than a few childhood years in their province of origin (barring later visits). It was a place of their childhood, a place where older relatives remembered and spoke of those still older and now long dead. It was a place where things used to happen, and my informants retold events or practices which they remembered from their childhood or had heard about their grandparents' childhoods: long ago and far away. Informants often prefaced answers to my questions with, "The olds [*ang matatanda*] back in...used to..." People in Asogue Street do not do those things now, or at best only infrequently.[127]

Since Asogue Street was first settled only about the time of the Japanese occupation, the residents could not draw on a long tradition for the area. Instead of being able to point to practices which had been followed in the area for generations, they could refer only to those things which were done "back there". Tugatog had been relatively unpopulated, so the history of the area, for the people of Asogue Street, was the history of their own settlement. However, the fifty years between Lolo Badong's arrival and the present was enough to produce a semi-mythical past, of the time when only

Badong and Nati had been there, and of how the spirits had been particularly active before so many people came to live near the street.

The past is far away, further away than the provinces, because it is that much harder to travel to. And as the oldest people, the ones who remember the early days of Asogue Street, fall into dotage or die, the past slips beyond the horizon, to remain only in the remembered tales that people heard when they were younger.

The World

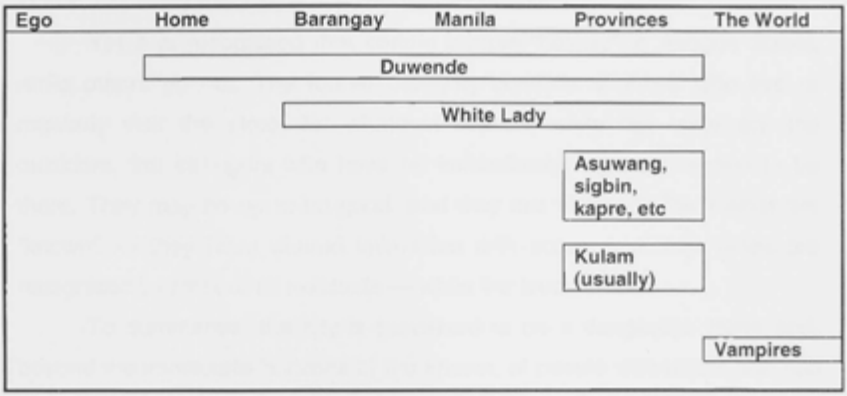
Beyond the provinces is the little-known outside world. Apart from those who, as overseas contract workers (OCWs) or spouses to foreigners, have journeyed beyond the boundaries of the Philippines, most people do not strongly differentiate between the various nations. It is knwn that there are different races: Caucasians (who are assumed to be from the United States until there is evidence to the contrary); Asians (automatically either Japanese or Korean); Saudis (anyone from the Middle East); and Blacks (who are lower class Americans). Chinese people are assigned a place within the Philippines: references to the Chinese are always references to Chinese-Filipinos, rather than to an ethnicity or nationality external to the Philippines.

While most people are aware that, say, America, Australia and Canada are different countries, they are usually unclear on where these places are on the globe (the United States excepted). Essentially, the world *is* the United States and the United States is the world: everything else is either a subsidiary nation or populated by non-whites.[128]

Informants are well aware that the United States is the most powerful nation on Earth. Other places are only of interest because someone went to Saudi Arabia to work, or married an Australian. In part this is due to the parochialism of Philippine news services. Very little information about events outside the Philippines is ever reported, except where it may impact directly on Filipinos.[129] After Philippine events, the local media report happenings in the United States. Additionally, most non-locally made television programmes are produced in the U.S.

The diagram below sums up the various conceptual zones discussed in this chapter, as well as the entities to be encountered in each zone. Of course, not every informant would necessarily agree with my diagram.

Below: The zones in which various powerful or dangerous entities would most likely be encountered.



Social Cohesion and Male Drinking

While it is true that Asogue Street is a focus for social interaction for the surrounding compounds, squatter settlements and streets, these people do not form a "community" in the sense of a bounded, reasonably self-aware and coherent group. People are aware that their kin and old friends tend also to be their neighbours, that most of their daily interactions and security revolve around those who live nearest to them, but it is an exceptionally porous kind of community. Rather than being "bounded", it has a "horizon", which tends to shift depending on the agent. Certainly, the strongest and most regularly-maintained relationships are those which are held closest to home: those between immediate kin in the same household, between those within the same compound, or between some of the neighbours who also reside in Asogue Street. But strong relationships can also obtain between people who live on the other side of the city or the country: they may be kin, old friends, workmates; it may be another *kapitbahayan* where the individual in question once lived, worked or played. In terms of chorology, places

inhabited by those you know become a specific place, rather than a general type of place.

Additionally, while most people know each other at least by sight within Asogue Street, there are various degrees of intimacy: not everyone interacts with everyone else, not everyone sits outside all of the *sari-sari* stores, not every male joins in every drinking session.

Yet it is recognised that certain people "belong" in Asogue Street, while others do not. The former category consists of those who live or regularly visit the street for whatever reason; while the latter are the outsiders, the strangers who have no immediately apparent reason to be there. They may be up to no good, and they are watched. The former are "known" — they have shared intimacies with some, and their faces are recognised by most or all residents — while the latter are not.

To summarise: the city is perceived to be a dangerous place and, beyond the immediate horizons of the known, of people with whom one has ties of kinship or friendship, there is generally considered to be great danger, particularly for the unwary. The converse of this is that within the horizons of the known, inside the frontier, is the greatest safety. The known is the area where daily interactions occur, where it is most important that one maintain smooth, peaceful and reasonably amicable relations, through dutiful kinship and good neighbourliness. One's own safety and the safety of one's family depend on this.

Strictly speaking, it is not necessary to maintain perfectly amicable relationships. More important is to have relationships where each individual in a given dyad or group is aware of what is expected of them, more or less, under normal conditions, and, perhaps more importantly, what is expected under conditions of crisis. When there are problems, whether these problems are caused by lack of money or possible physical danger, it is important to have allies who are aware of their expected obligations towards you. The expectations of ideal "right" behaviour, the obligations, are known to everyone, to the extent that my questions about this elicited much the same response regardless of whom I questioned. Whether or not individuals

accepted that those obligations applied to them under specific circumstances is a completely different question — but they are aware of the ideal.

It has already been mentioned that the most important allies are kin, both consanguineal and affinal, and, beyond that, "old friends" and neighbours. Since each of these provides a bulwark against external danger, safety is at least partly the result of surrounding oneself with a network of allies, it is important to see how people maintain good relationships. These maintenance techniques are in their own way as important for securing and ensuring aid in times of crisis as are the various methods of prophylaxis used to avoid or ward off sickness and the Third Kind.

What follows is largely centred on the maintenance strategies employed by men. Although women do maintain friendships with each other, outside of the safety of the compound and the house, I am most familiar with male startegies of friendship or alliance creations and maintenance. It is alliances between men that are most usually activated when one needs financial or physical assistance, and much of the time men spend in public is devoted to forming and cementing alliances, both with kin, fictive kin and friends.

Although there are a variety of techniques which the men (and, of course, the women) can use, these seem to rely on a very small number of guiding moral or ethical principles which are understood, if not adhered to, by most or all of the adult residents of Asogue Street. They are norms to the extent that they are recognised by almost everybody, a common set of principles which guide and make coherent certain aspects of men's and women's behaviour. There are only a small number of these norms which I wish to explore, as I feel they have the most relevance to this discussion: *hiya*, *amor propio*, *utang na loob*, *pakikisama* and the primacy of the family.[130]

Hiya can be glossed as shame, but also includes connotations of modesty, circumspection, discretion and respect for others, as well as shyness. To be ashamed for one's transgressions, to be shy in front of strangers[131] or to avoid confrontation with others (although not at all costs —

there are times when one must fight) are all manifestations of *hiya*. On the other hand, to be a con man or to run from a necessary fight indicate a lack of *hiya*, similar to the English concept of "shamelessness". *Hiya* is at once a sense of one's own self-worth and an awareness of one's own insignificance in the broader scheme of things.

Hiya results in a tendency on the part of most people to avoid situations where they or others may be shamed. One can be shamed by being publicly humiliated, especially in situations where one of two parties must say "no" to the other, a problem that could be potentially shaming for both, since it is exceptionally bad manners to decline another's request (even when one has the best of reasons), and it is also bad manners to put another in the position where they must say no. Where the supplicant feels that a request is likely to meet with a rebuff, they often employ a third party to act as a go-between, which allows a modicum of circumspection in request and rebuff, and minimises the potential for *hiya* to all concerned. Likewise, where two parties are in dispute, peace overtures are generally made by a go-between for similar reasons.

By the same token, it is very important to offer hospitality to one's guest, to give them the best food, the best drink (*alak* or soft drinks), even the best chair. Failure to give the best one has to one's guest, even if this failure is to avoid incurring debt, is shameful. At the same time, one must offer the best one has in a suitably modest, self-effacing way: *hiya* embodied.

Another source of shame is the suggestion that a person's report of an event is untrue, or that they were mistaken (Manlove 1990:551). Although, with regards to the Third Kind, to see is to believe, one does not suggest that others are lying or do not know what they are talking about, at least not to their faces. It is important that, publicly, people are not seen to be questioning each other's veracity.

Individuals are likely to feel intense *hiya* when brought into face-to-face contact with those whom they feel are of a higher social status (whether through education, wealth or birth), or their benefactors. I occasionally met

people who simply refused to speak to me beyond non-committal, one word replies to my attempts at small talk, or look me in the eye, even though I had been told that they very much wanted to meet me. My friends always said afterwards that it was just *hiya*, they were ashamed because their English was not as good as mine (even though much of the time I was attempting to talk to them in Tagalog). This event was rather rare, since I was considered by my home compound to be quasi-kin.[132]

Although I did not hear the term *amor propio* used in Asogue Street, I did see behaviour which was obviously influenced by it. The concept is often linked to *hiya* in the literature. This can be glossed as "pride, sensitivity to personal affront" (Lynch 1970:15-17), "self-esteem but not necessarily self-confidence" (Guthrie 1971:61-62). It does not necessarily reflect a tendency to fight others, but more the degree to which an individual refuses to allow insults to pass without seeking satisfaction from the offender.

Closely related to *hiya* is *utang na loob*, or "debt of the inside". It is a debt that can never be repaid, a debt beyond that of mere money. One would always owe such a debt to benefactors, particularly parents, godparents or those who have aided one in obtaining work or been instrumental in rescuing one from financial difficulties. It places the debtor in a permanent client status to the benefactor: since the debt can never be repaid, the debtor should always come to the aid of, and defer to, their good samaritan. In Asogue Street, one man who worked in a flour mill had never, in the ten years since obtaining the job, forgotten to make his gratitude known to the people who had been instrumental in securing him employment in the first place, visiting them at Christmas and on birthdays. Only a person without *hiya* would fail to live up to the obligations imposed by a debt of the inside (see Ileto 1989 for an extended discussion of the importance of *utang na loob* in popular nationalist discourse).

Both *hiya* and *utang na loob* obtain within the family, as well as with non-kin. However, the ties within a family are generally much more oriented towards alliance and mutual help than with non-kin, who are considered to

be neutral or antagonistic (looking after the interests of their own families) unless there is some strong tie between people from different families.

As has been mentioned, an individual's kin are his or her closest allies. This was succinctly set out for me by Gerardo, who asked me what I would do if my brother were involved in a fight. When I answered that I would most probably try to stop the fight to ensure that nobody, especially my brother, got hurt, he said that this was certainly not the Filipino way. "If my brother gets into a fight, then I will join him. I won't ask what it's about, who is right or who is wrong. If they want to use knives, then we will use knives. My family first, right or wrong." This view of the primacy of kinship ties was echoed by most men I approached.

Kinship ties are often of greater immediate significance than an individual's legal obligations to society or the state.

> Some of the young, unmarried men in most streets or areas in Tugatog belong to locality-based street gangs, which have varied reputations for ferocity or peaceableness. The Asogue Street boys, or *Tropog* [from *tropang pogi*, or "handsome gang"] are basically peace-loving, and generally act as a group only to play friendly basketball matches with their nearest neighbours, the Cemetery Boys, who are also their allies.
>
> Late one night, the members of both gangs got into a fight with each other, an almost unheard-of event. Apparently both groups had been drinking and, on encountering each other in the street, a scuffle broke out. What caused it is unclear: perhaps somebody nudged somebody else in passing, or bad [impolite] words were spoken. Either way, a brief fight erupted which was over almost as soon as it started, since one of the *Tropog* boys (who I'll call Juan) pulled a knife and slashed an adversary across the arm (I'll call the injured man Cres).
>
> Within a few days, both sides began to make overtures of peace towards the other, with *barangay* officials acting as go-betweens. It seems that both sides felt rather sheepish and remorseful about the whole affair, and did not want to have a grudge — let alone an ongoing gang war — with their erstwhile allies and basketball opponents.
>
> While this was going on, Cres' brother, a police officer, heard about his brother's injury. While apparently a bad cut, it was certainly not life-threatening. The brother went to see Juan and, while using his uniform as a symbol of authority,

> threatened the young man if he should ever be seen in public again.

Although the threat was hollow — Juan was not, to my knowledge, ever singled out by Cres' brother for harassment — this example should illustrate the importance of kinship ties. As a police officer, Cres' brother wielded immense power, and he was able to threaten Juan with impunity. I have no doubt that he could have carried out his threats without any danger to himself or his career.

Gang membership is another way of increasing one's access to friends and these friends often become *kumpadres* later on. *Tropog* and the other gangs in neighbouring areas are basically law-abiding, in that they help to keep the streets quiet: outsiders would be unlikely to want to make trouble while the *Tropog* boys were out in force, practising basketball or drinking. Although these gangs may occasionally get involved in turf clashes, they should not be confused with the major, semi-regional groupings such as OXO, Sigue-Sigue Sputnik, Sigue-Sigue Commandos or the Bahala Na gang. These latter gangs, which are pan-Philippine in scale and membership, are considered to operate largely in the prisons, and are much less active than they once were in the streets (see also Sanchez & Agpaoa 1979:55; Jocano 1975:100-122).

Since informants consider all descendants of a common great- or great-great-grandparent, as well as collateral add-ons due to marriage, to be kin, most individuals have a large pool of recognised relatives whom they can call on for help in an emergency (although, of course, this is limited by the nature of the problem, and who is actually around at the time — a large family in southern Mindanao is not of much immediate help in Manila). Under the umbrella of kinship, most people have only a hazy idea of exactly how they and some of their more distant kin are related. I was commonly told that the old people knew the connections, and everyone else agreed with them (generally, however, I was able to fit most people in my compound into a genealogical chart, although it required questioning of several different informants). Instead, most extended kin, especially those of about the same

age, are simply lumped together as "cousins", and left as that. Anyone who is a cousin is kin, and therefore an ally. Additionally, in the case of the opposite sex, such kin are within the limits of incest prohibitions.

While members of the opposite sex beyond third or fourth cousin are considered to be non-incestuous marriage partners (i.e., non-kin), this does not necessarily mean that everyone beyond those limits will be excluded from the class of all people who are kin, especially if those people may be of some use. It is more likely that people who are related beyond the third or fourth degree simply get "forgotten": their apical ancestor would be a sibling or cousin of ego's apical ancestor. However, those apical ancestors are most likely dead and so connections with collateral branches of the family have been lost.

Of course, disputes arise within family networks, and in such cases it is not necessarily a clear-cut case of "us" versus "them". Any such problems would tend to continue to simmer for a long period or be resolved immediately; when faced with problems caused by persons outside of the family, it would be expected that such purely internal difficulties would be temporarily suspended. No matter whether they are hated and despised, a cousin or father or niece is still a cousin or father or niece, and they must be helped in times of need (and, conversely, can also be approached for aid, although the humbie pie to be swallowed in such cases has more than its fair share of gristle).

> One afternoon, a crowd of people had gathered along Asogue Street and were watching something down at the far end. I asked one of my neighbours what was going on, and they said they weren't sure, but they thought there had been a fight. We waited for further news, people milling around in loose clusters, exchanging or amplifying the rumours. A little later, a boy came past, telling everyone that there had been a fight over a card game while men were drinking, and someone had been stabbed, albeit non-fatally. This man was from a family in the squatter settlement whom none of my closest friends knew.
>
> After perhaps half an hour, a police car arrived, and two burly officers got out of it at the end of the street. They disappeared into the warren of alleys at that end, and stayed there for about fifteen minutes. Then they left.

> The next day, I asked one of the *sari-sari* store keepers (they are the eyes and ears of the whole street) what happened with the stabbing. I was told that a someone had stabbed his cousin while drunk and playing cards, and was pretty upset about it. It seems the victim wasn't seriously injured. They had decided to forget the incident, since it was between relatives. When I asked what the police would do about it, he shrugged and said that as the family wasn't interested in taking the problems to court the police would probably forget about it.

Except perhaps among the most influential and well-connected families, reliance on kinship is never enough. In everyday life, one regularly interacts with people who are not kin, but who, by necessity, must be trusted (such as neighbours and workmates) or who are in positions of authority (employees, *barangay* councillors). Such people can be redefined as pseudo-kin through the *kumpadrazgo* system, which is widespread throughout ex-Spanish colonies.

Whenever a child is to be baptised, the parents may ask up to six men and six women to stand as godparents (*ninong* [godfather] or *ninang* [godmother]) to the infant. In addition to the rights and obligations of a godparent to the godchild as laid down in Catholic ritual — ensure the child does not fall into the clutches of Satan, be willing to take the child in or contribute to its upkeep if anything should happen to the parents — a godparent is also expected to provide gifts (often simply small amounts of money) for the godchild [*ina-anak*] on significant birthdays and at Christmas. These gifts usually taper off as the child reaches adolescence. For many families, Christmas day was spent in taking small children around to as many of the godparents as possible, or in waiting for one's own expectant godchildren to arrive.[133]

The lifelong ties that are formed between *ninong* or *ninang* and their *ina-anak* are in some ways secondary to the link which is created between the parents of the child and the godparents. The adults linked in this way refer to and address each other as *kumpadre* for a male and *kumare* for a female; these terms are virtually always shortened to *pare* and *mare*. One always calls one's *kumpadre* or *kumare* by his or her title, and one should

also precede that person's name with their title when referring to them in the third person.

This is a relationship which is expected to be "closer than brothers", one of mutual aid, trust and respect. If one's kin are always expected to be one's allies against outsiders, then one's collection of *kumpadre* and *kumare*, as pseudo-kin, represent a strategy for getting around the age-old problem that one cannot choose one's relatives. People generally ask neighbours and old friends (particularly one's old school friends or, for men, drinking buddies) to become *kumpadre/kumare*. This is often a way of ratifying or recognising a long-term, close relationship and people who are not so related may still refer to each other as *pare* or *mare* in normal speech, to indicate to each other and to everyone else that theirs is a close and respectful friendship/alliance.

Apart from old friends, the *kumpadrazgo* system is also used strategically, to obtain or forcibly create alliances with people who may be of some use to the parent or, later on in life, to the child. Such people include the locally politically or economically powerful, or employers. This use of the ties created through godparentage are both tacitly understood by everyone and completely misrecognised. Everyone does it — to be invited to become a godparent is uniformly accounted a great honour, and something that cannot be declined (only at Christmas did a few people confide between visits that they wished they did not have quite so many godchildren). At the same time, people use the system strategically, either for themselves or their child. However, simply being a godparent does not ensure that the *kumpadre* will "come to the party" in time of need.[134]

It is largely, although not solely, through the actions of men that kinship ties and quasi-kinship ties are initiated, maintained and constantly re-affirmed. Just as the street is more emphatically the domain of adult males and children of both sexes[135] than it is for women — without being exclusively so — so too are most relationships *outside* the bounds of the household or compound the province of men. Thus, while female godparents should have ties as closely binding as those that hold between men (and, of

course, the pseudo-sibling relationship should hold across genders), it is the men, at least in Asogue Street, who most often initiate and use the *kumpadrazgo* system.

Within the compound, mothers, wives, unmarried (but marriable) daughters may visit each other to borrow items of food or household articles, to talk and to gossip. Since there are so many unemployed men, they will also take part in the daily round of exchanges of food, items and information. However, between men, it is not so much in the humdrum activities of everyday life, the chores of cleaning, cooking and childrearing, that relationships are affirmed and confirmed; instead, it is through the shared activity of drinking. And it is drinking which exemplifies *pakikisama*.

Drinking is the male activity *par excellence*. Some women drink, but rarely anything stronger than beer, and almost never to excess. By contrast, male drinking is almost always carried to excess, until the participants have had enough, or are unable to drink any more. It is commonly said by Filipinos, when they begin a drinking session [*inuman*], "We will drink until we can't drink no more" [*sic*, in English]. There are a number of fairly strict rules of etiquette involved in drinking and, since it is a major practice of male Filipinos in my fieldwork site, well worth discussing in some detail.

To begin with, there are a number of types of *alak* (any alcoholic beverage, but more often translated by Filipinos as "wine"), broadly classed into three categories: "hard liquor"; "ladies' drinks" (or "women's drinks") (E); and a third category which is unnamed, but basically consists of beer. The ladies' drinks refer to the alcoholic beverages which patrons must purchase for "hospitality girls" (E) at the karaoke bars. These are generally highly-diluted spirits and massively expensive (the bar and the hospitality girl split the profit on the drinks bought for the women). Although rarely referred to, one informant who discussed the relatively greater variety of alcoholic beverages available in Australia and to wealthy Filipinos, told me that champagne was also a "ladies' drink".

Hard liquor includes the various sorts of brandy (Fundador, Emperador — guaranteed to leave no hangover), rum (Tanduay), *tuba*

(fermented green coconut juice), *lambanog* (distilled *tuba*) and gin. Although relatively expensive spirits, such as the various varieties of brandy, are highly prized, it is gin (and occasionally rum) that are the most often purchased. San Miguel Ginebra [gin] is cheap (approximately P12 for 375 mL, and potent: a small bottle of the stuff is enough to inebriate most men I knew, including myself). The rum is similar in potency and price, but less common.

Apart from hard liquor, beer is occasionally drunk, although it is rare because of its relative expense and low alcoholic content (remember, the ultimate aim of drinking here is to become inebriated). Although there are a variety of beer brands in the Philippines, only two were easily obtainable in Asogue Street: San Miguel Beer (a different company to the producers of the gin of the same name) and Red Horse. Both cost approximately P12-15 for a 375 mL bottle. Red Horse is a very potent brew, though not as strong as the spirits. San Miguel beer, being comparatively weaker (4.5 per cent alcohol by volume) and therefore costly (one has to drink a great deal of it to become incapacitated), was generally reserved for special occasions of the highest order (such as funerals, weddings, Christmas and baptisms). Red Horse and the expensive spirits were drunk on other occasions, and gin was the fuel for the everyday drinking sessions.[136]

Although money is usually in short supply and people have trouble meeting the costs of necessities, it was often remarked to me that "there is always money for drinking". In part, this is because the cheaper gin is the usual drink of the *inuman*: very few men could drink more than one or two bottles of gin in the course of an evening, so the costs were fairly low. Additionally, most men would "kick off" a drinking session by purchasing several bottles, and then other men buy as the session progresses. Usually, they started an *inuman* precisely because they had the money to do so, perhaps from an unexpected windfall or even the normal receipt of their pay. There was always somebody who could afford to do this, or who had good credit at one of the *sari-sari* stores (actually, it was very hard for a shopkeeper to refuse a neighbour's request for credit because of the shame

that would be incurred by both parties). It was possible to attend at least one or two drinking sessions a week, just in my home compound — these were always gin, and usually occurred after people had received their weekly pay: men generally hand over their pay to their wives, but are entitled to keep enough for the fares to and from work, for cigarettes and for gin. Elaborate and expensive drinking sessions with beer or brandy and specially-prepared foods were very rare.

There are two ways in which to conduct a drinking session: *bote-bote* and *tagay-tagay*. If the participants are drinking *bote-bote* (lit. "bottle-bottle"), then each drinker has his own glass or bottle, and drinks at his own pace. One can only drink beer in this manner, partly because drinking a whole bottle of gin is difficult for most people, and one should always finish one's drink in order not to offend the host. This style of drinking is not always employed when beer is drunk (Filipinos tend to prefer the second method), and usually only occurs during the sorts of special occasions where San Miguel Beer is served.

The second method of drinking, *tagay-tagay* (lit. shot-shot) is preferred for two reasons: firstly, it promotes *pakikisama* (togetherness), since all the drinkers are doing the same thing and at much the same rate, and, secondly, because it is physically easier to drink the cheaper and very rough gin in this way. In this method, all the drinkers sit in a rough circle. One man (often the youngest person in the session) is assigned as the *tanggero*.[137] His task is to pour out a small amount of liquor to each participant in turn, usually in a small shot-glass. It is very important that no person is missed out in the sequence, and that nobody receives two shots in succession. Such breaches of etiquette have been known to lead to fights (it is said that being *tanggero* can be a dangerous job) — I heard of fights occurring because of etiquette breaches during drinking, but never in my home compound.

The etiquette of drinking is quite complex. Effectively, it is the *tanggero's* role to ensure that each person receives an equal share of the liquor, and that each person receives their drink in the correct sequence, and

further that the movement of the alcohol is not retarded by slow drinkers. To begin with, the tanggero pours out the liquor into a shot glass and then passes that (along with any chaser, usually water) to the person to their immediate left or right. I was told that there was no significance in moving in a particular direction, that this was purely a matter of the *tanggero's* choice. Each person in the session receives roughly the same amount of the same drink. When the glass has done a complete circuit, the *tanggero* must, before drinking his own measure, turn to the first person in the circuit (the man to the immediate left or right) and declare to them that the drink belongs to the *tanggero*. I was told that this act serves two purposes: firstly, it ensures that the *tanggero* is not drinking more or less than his allotted share, and; secondly, warns the first person that a new circuit is about to commence.

Anyone who wishes to join the session may due so, although it is rare that one would join a session with a group of complete strangers (for reasons of safety). Secondly, any passersby who are known to the drinkers must be invited to join the session, or to at least have one drink with them (this is usually signalled by the drinkers calling out "One shot!" or "Your shot!", either in Tagalog or English). If the person hailed is a known non-drinker, it would be bad manners not to at least invite them (since this is as an act of *pakikisama*). Anyone who accepts such an invitation must be immediately given their shot, suspending the normal round. Should that person join in the drinking, they are slotted in at the point in the round when they received their first shot, regardless of where they choose to sit. This can become quite confusing when a lot of people are moving to and fro. However, once a drinker joins the "circle", they stay more-or-less in the one place.

It is bad manners to decline an invitation to drink: the minimum acceptance (except for known non-drinkers) is one shot. However, if one has a pressing engagement, is on medication or claims "stomach ache" (by clutching one's belly and grimacing), then one is excused. Often, people who shy from having at least one drink will purchase a bottle of gin for the

drinkers, by way of engaging in the session; however, this is not obligatory. It is also extremely bad manners to drink something other than that which the others are drinking, since it is an obvious breaking-off of *pakikisama*. While in the field, I was allowed to use soft drink as a chaser, rather than water, since my aversion to unboiled tap water was well known.

Drinking will continue until everyone has gone home, is unable to drink any more, or has no more money to purchase alcohol (or since most *sari-sari* stores accept credit, it may end when the alcohol is finished and the shops have all closed for the evening). Since one should not leave while there is still alcohol to be drunk, the most acceptable manner to go is to simply "duck away" without warning. This option is not available for the *tanggero*, who must have a pressing reason to finish drinking, and someone must be able to replace him. Being *tanggero* is considered a "toughening up" exercise in order to accustom the young man to consuming large amounts of alcohol. The ability to consume large amounts of any sort of alcohol and to get along with other men in any situation (i.e., drinking) merits the title "cowboy" (E), quite an accolade.

It is exceptionally bad manners to suggest to anyone that they have had enough to drink or should go home. I was told that, since the ability to drink is bound up with one's manhood, questioning an individual's ability to continue drinking is tantamount to questioning their manhood, which may lead to strife if the other person takes offence.

"Bad behaviour" — anything from impolite words to outright threats of violence — was rare, either during drinking sessions or at other times. When it did occur, it was most often the case that one or both parties had been drinking, and it was for this reason that drinking had an aura of being a dangerous activity. Such "bad behaviour" met with the censure of all people, male and female, yet at the same time it was considered by most informants that what men did when they were drunk were not matters to dwell on, because the men did not know what they were doing at the time. However, the general rule that men's drunken behaviour should be forgotten was likely to be suspended if a particular event was considered funny or in some way

to the drinker's credit: a good anecdote was always worth telling. Furthermore, men were more likely to ignore drunken "bad behaviour" than women — most men, at one time or another, behaved badly because of drink, so to censure other men would be hypocritical.

Although many drinking sessions are more or less funded by one person, just as many begin simply because one man buys a bottle or two of gin, and then others join in and replenish the supply as the night wears on. Indeed, after a host has bought numerous bottles, others may take over the role from him. Spending money on *alak* or *pulutan* (the snacks — sometimes quite elaborate — which accompany any drinking session) are ways in which men show hospitality or largesse, and in so doing attempt to maintain or create friendships, gain status, create a favourable impression of themselves in others, or share good fortune if they have had a windfall (sharing is another aspect of *pakikisama*).

When one drinks, the group of drinkers is referred to as the *barkada*. However, a *barkada* is not merely a group of people in a drinking session (although — as I understand this — it can mean just that): it more usually refers to a group of close friends of the same gender.[138] These are the friends who will stand by you through good and bad fortune, to be your groomsmen at your wedding, or join in should you get into a fight. They are often childhood friends, and always the sentimental favourites to be invited to become *kumpadres*. They are boon companions, and this companionship is fuelled by *pakikisama*.

Men told me they drank for *pakikisama*, for friendship, to show hospitality, or because it was the accepted and expected thing to do on special occasions. However, they also told me that they drank in order to "forget their problems". In this, it seems to me that they displayed a pattern of behaviour not dissimilar to that shown by the dispossessed and existentially hopeless. Drinking is often a release from the tensions created by insecurity of employment or existence or an inability to follow normative expectations with regards to what it means to "be a man" in a particular culture.

> A classic rationalization used by husbands who are alcoholics is the assertion that drinking makes them feel strong and courageous. Heavy drinking is a major problem in the depressed neighborhoods of La Loma [the Manila slum area where this study was based]. It might well find its origin in insurmountable frustrations and securities. As such, it is part and parcel of the poverty syndrome. (Decaesstecker 1975:123, footnote 4)

They escape their problems, temporarily and illusorily, in alcohol consumption.

The attitudes of women to men's drinking varies from trenchant hostility to an acceptance based on compromise. While no woman told me they approved of male drinking, it was rare that they were positively hostile to it, either. Most women cited the cost of alcohol and alcohol-incited aggressive behaviour as reasons for their opposition to male consumption of liquor. On the other hand, these same women said that they were happy for their men to drink, so long as it was restricted in consumption and occasional in frequency. They saw it as a release for the men, something which they "didn't mind" the men doing from time to time. They also accepted that drinking was an obligatory part of all social events, and I never heard a woman object to such drinking *per se*.

> One woman was so against her husband's alcohol consumption that he was forced to keep bottles of gin hidden in the houses of various relatives and friends, so that he could take nips when she was unable to catch him. As this man had a secure full-time job with a degree of seniority, many people considered his wife's attitude extreme, since his drinking did not interfere with his job, nor was it excessive (or a serious drain on the household's finances).

Although the *inuman* is an arena for men to show their generosity and social adeptness, and a venue for release from the frustrations of quotidian existence, it is also (and perhaps most importantly) a metaphor for, and physical enactment of, *pakikisama*. It is this togetherness, without distinctions, that the drinking rituals most strongly demonstrate and reinforce.

Of course, there are other ways in which *pakikisama* is simultaneously seen in action and promoted, particularly through the *bayanihan* system.

Bayanihan is to help out: if your neighbours are working, then you should pitch in, help share the work and therefore make it easier and quicker. This should be done without thought of reward, since one day you may need the help of your neighbours and friends. Of course, whoever is paying for the building work or task at hand will most likely buy *alak* for everyone when the job is finished, so there is often an immediate reward for those who help (as well as an opportunity for the "employer" to show generosity).

Like the *inuman*, *bayanihan* is a tangible, immediate expression of *pakikisama*, that principle which helps people — but especially men — orient themselves in the social world of the compound and of the street.

Pakikisama was variously described to me as meaning "togetherness", "everybody together", or "everyone doing the same thing". In a word, it represents communality, a tie of perceived equality that binds men who share common understandings, woes, aspirations and activities. It is an expression of the glue which binds the *barkada* together: friendship; kinship; *kumpadrazgo*-ship. Thus, emphasis is placed within the *inuman* on everyone's sameness — everyone drinks together, everyone drinks the same thing, everyone has their turn with the shot glass (and the order of drinking bears no relationship to status, wealth or age inequalities, with the partial exceptions of the *tanggero* and the constitution of one's *barkada*).[139]

The word *pakikisama* is based on the root *sama*, which means, roughly, "to go with (someone or something)", essentially "togetherness" in the present tense, or "going together". Lynch (1970:10-11) glosses it in terms of peer pressure: "giving in", "following the lead or suggestion of another", "concession". "It refers especially to the lauded practice of yielding to the will of the leader or majority so as to make the group decision unanimous. No one likes a hold-out." According to Guthrie (1971:63), "Filipinos place a high value on good feelings and sacrifice other values such as clear

communication and achievement in order to avoid stressful communications."

Pakikisama reminds men that, as they say, "no man is an island" [E]: one stands and falls by — and with — one's friends. You help your friends in time of crisis and, hopefully, they will do the same for you. Nobody should ever be alone, even when travelling. The first question a traveller is asked by others is not where one will go, but who will be one's *kasama* [companion, again from the root *sama*].

Note the assumption that, when travelling, one has a *kasama*, a travelling companion. To go anywhere alone is highly unusual, except when travelling to and from work. Otherwise, people almost always took a companion along, for company and mutual support on the journey, and perhaps also for security. Women usually had a companion if they left the home compound, whereas men might walk around Asogue Street alone, but would tend to take someone if they went further afield. I was told that this stems from a desire to do things in a group, that to be on one's own was virtually synonymous with being unhappy.[140] However, I also suspect that it stems from a desire for the security that travelling in a group affords on foreign turf, and my own preference for travelling alone often surprised people.

The equality of *pakikisama* is partly illusory. Although no one would ever admit it, status and wealth differences are still clear to everyone even in the throes of everyone drinking together.[141] The *inuman* is still a time for the wealthy to show their largesse, to buy *alak* and *pulutan*, to play the benefactor. And there is an unwritten assumption that they will do so; not necessarily all the time, but they will, eventually, average out by paying for more than their equal share. Perhaps *pakikisama* entails, not just equality, but equality based on perceived capacity to pay. And in doing so, the (relatively) more wealthy win gratitude, respect and a good reputation, valued forms of symbolic capital.

Although people realise that the egalitarianism of *pakikisama* is partly a lie, yet they pay lip-service to the image of an equality shared by all

neighbours and friends, at least within the *barkada*. To share food, alcohol or labour is to display highly-valued qualities: generosity and simple-heartedness, while at the same time refusing to recognise publicly that there are marked differences in status and wealth between men and families in the compound and in the street. To publicly acknowledge this — which nobody ever forgets, privately — would be to run the risk of classifying men as more or less worthy than each other. If this happened, the broad social cohesion which is generated by being surrounded by one's kin, *kumpadres* and *barkada* could be threatened. And it is that social cohesion which provides security for individuals and their family, because "no man is an island".

Effects of Drinking

The residents of Asogue Street take care to protect themselves and their families from perceived sources of danger, whether that danger comes from the Third Kind, *mikrobia*, or the hostility and uncertainty of strangers. Yet, there are also ways in which the protective web that binds kin, neighbours and old friends against the perceived threats of the "outside" can itself generate problems and be a source of possible danger. Nowhere is this more evident than at the *inuman*. Drinking has an aura, a reputation of being a dangerous activity, a time and place in which unpleasant events — whether "bad words" or physical violence — have a tendency to erupt from the under the surface of everyday interaction.

Under normal circumstances, people attempt to keep relations with their kin and neighbours as trouble-free as possible. It is important to be polite, especially by speaking without the use of "bad words"; additionally, people attempt to avoid situations where disputes may arise or where ongoing disputes are brought out into the open — this includes people's tendency to avoid articulating or rendering explicit relative differences in status, wealth or skill. One does not show off one's superiority, and others will not directly refer to it. In a similar vein, gifts should be given quietly, and the recipient should be quietly grateful, but not overly effusive. To make too much of the gift *at the time of receipt* could bring shame, not only on the

giver and the receiver, but also on other people who may not have received a present. In this, circumspection, *hiya*, is an important attribute for giver, receiver and the rest.

Indeed, part of the etiquette of gift-giving is to ensure that everyone (however "everyone" may be defined) receives something, no matter how small. The most important thing is not what the gift is, but that it is given and received — for someone not to receive something is a possible source of shame because it is a form of disparity in a world marked by limited good. This is especially important when the gifts are *regalo* [remembrances] and *pasalubong* [given by a traveller when they return home]: the former gifts are to ensure that the recipient does not forget the giver when they leave a place, while the latter show that the returning giver did not forget the recipient while away. The importance of "spreading around" the gifts was always stressed more strongly by the poorer residents of Asogue Street. The wealthier ones, who had more to give (and therefore more to lose), tended to downplay the importance of the communal nature of gifts, although in actual practice their gift-giving generally conformed with the expected norm.[142]

People's behaviour with regards to gift-giving is bound up in circumspection and the desire not to highlight inequalities or other possible sources of shame or personal grievance, a style of interaction which is repeated in most areas of interpersonal behaviour. While Philippine movies and soap operas may portray, even revel in, extreme emotions extremely represented, one's everyday interactions are always marked by an absence of extremes of emotions, by politeness. Where situations arise, as they must, which could possibly cause *hiya*, various strategies are employed to avoid or minimise the fall out: thus, go-betweens are often used when a favour is being sought or there is an ongoing dispute between two parties. In both cases, a refusal to grant the favour or the unpleasantness associated with warring factions is circumvented.

Although the surface of daily life is marked by circumspection, life is still a struggle for the necessities, a constant round of anxieties and minor fears for the future. How to feed, clothe and shelter one's family? How to

cope with illness? Existence for the residents of Asogue Street was often summed up to me thus: "*Mahirap ang buhay sa Pilipinas*" [Life is difficult/poor/hard in the Philippines]. The constant round of attempting to find work, an income; of attempting to maintain that income; of meeting one's obligations to kin and friends; the frustration some men often feel in being forced to rely on their womenfolk to provide for them; the frustration some women feel because the men waste their money on drinking and, to a lesser extent, gambling; the constant need to be polite, never to let one's frustrations or anger simmer over; the nagging fears for the future, that not only will things not improve, but they are going to get worse: just like the characters in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking-Glass, people often feel that they have to run as fast as they can just to stay in the one place — and even then, they feel that they are losing ground against inflation and unemployment. Sometimes, these frustrations boil over into conflict.

Explicit, public arguments do occur without the lubrication which alcohol provides. Spouses will quarrel and women, who generally do not drink, will also have public arguments. However, in my experience, incidents of physical and verbal violence were predominantly associated with excessive alcohol consumption.

Men drink for *pakikisama*, but they also drink to escape, if only briefly, their woes and worries, the possible sense of emasculation which comes from near-constant unemployment or under-employment. They would often say that they "drink to be happy", "drink to forget for a while". The *barkada* affirms their sense of self-worth and their membership in a group, whether that group is composed of kin, *kumpadres* or workmates. At the same time, alcohol serves to loosen the ties that bind men to particular sorts of behaviour, and they may dwell on insoluble problems. Under the influence of alcohol they may pass through the initial stage of cheerfulness and become morose, angry at either a specific woe or merely the perceived continuing hopelessness of their situation. It is at these times that fights are most likely to break out.

In general, the arguments are minor and quickly patched up, although the real, underlying cause is generally not soluble, at least not in the temporary, "just keeping the peace" fashion which characterises peace-making at drinking sessions. While men's behaviour may be irrational, and occasionally verging on, or slipping into, the dangerous, it is said that this is merely "drunken words", the result of over-indulgence, and not to be taken seriously. Of course, it is possible for someone to act in such a way that it simply cannot be shrugged off — women are less likely than men to forgive and forget the things that happened during yesterday's drinking session (if anything untoward happened at all).

Although at some time or other almost every man speaks or acts badly out of drunkenness, there are some who have a reputation for repeated morosity and antisocial behaviour. Such men are not accorded much respect by their neighbours (but are still treated with respect in any face-to-face encounter); however, despite their reputation, they are still welcome at drinking sessions. To attempt to bar them would probably create trouble: the *inuman* is the one place where men's identities are reaffirmed, and a ban on a particular man would be humiliating.

People, particularly men, prefer not to state explicitly that much of the "drunken words" and "bad behaviour" associated with drinking also reveal endemic problems. To do so would be to acknowledge publicly the ongoing stresses and disparities of life in Asogue Street. While much of the violence which arises out of drinking sessions is directionless and apparently random (such as when a *tanggero* is stabbed over a perceived breach of etiquette), with the roots of such behaviour in the frustration of everyday life, it is also true that alcohol-related violence can crystallise specific problems and force individuals to recognise these and take action.

> Joen, a young married man with an infant daughter, lived next door to his parents in an area that had partitioned off. A qualified engineer, he was unable to find work and this had been causing him a great deal of anxiety, as he was effectively living off his father's income. This arrangement caused him a great deal of embarrassment since he wanted to provide for his own family. At the same time, his father felt that he did not

> receive enough respect from Joen, whose family he was supporting financially through his regular work as a carpenter.
>
> Matters came to a head at a drinking session when Joen's maternal uncle, Peter, got very drunk and began to needle Joen about his disrespectful attitude. Eventually, Joen attacked Peter, and the two scuffled for a few minutes before they were pulled apart.
>
> The fight heightened tensions between Joen's parents, and a few days later, Joen's father moved out. He went to live at the far end of Tugatog, where he had consanguineal relatives. At the time I left the field, he was still living there and had not achieved a reconciliation with either Joen or his wife. Peter and Joen, meanwhile, scrupulously avoided each other.

I was never able to determine precisely why the fight should have caused Joen's parents to separate. Apparently this was not the first time it had happened. The fight, which made explicit the rancour and stresses between Joen, his father and his uncle, also served to bring to a head the unresolved problems between Joen's parents. The aftermath of the fight was socially awkward for the residents of Asogue Street, since Joen's entire family were popular and nobody wished to be seen to be favouring one person over another (regardless of their personal opinions as to who was right or wrong).

It is a paradox of the *inuman* and the *barkada* that they are the (theoretically) safest place and social situation that a man can be in, while simultaneously drinking with even one's closest kin and friends carries a partly justified reputation for being a dangerous activity. It is in drinking that men attempt to reaffirm themselves with their friends and relatives, those others who can be relied upon in a crisis. Yet it is also through drink that anger at the way the world is and the problems of existence are most likely to flare into violence — and among the people who are the most likely candidates for social friction, the nagging personality clashes and incipient crises of the everyday. Regardless of the perceived danger of the world outside Asogue Street and beyond the realms of daily interaction, it is the people with whom one should be most safe, who under the liberating effects of alcohol, become the most likely sources of danger.

Sechrest's (1969:313) findings appear to support the impression that drinking can be a dangerous time:

> It is clear from my data that homicides involving friends and acquaintances are more frequent in the Philippines than in the United States and that they develop more frequently out of momentarily difficult interpersonal situations. Filipinos less often kill family members than do Americans, but they more often kill strangers, again in situations in which momentary difficulties in interpersonal relations develop. A fairly typical Philippine example of a situation leading to homicide involving strangers or acquaintances is one in which a Filipino on a drinking spree invites another to have a drink with him and is grievously affronted when the other refuses.

Of course, violence within the *barkada* and between kin very rarely has the serious physical consequences that may occur if one is mugged by drug addicts or caught in a crossfire between police and criminals at a bank holdup. However, these latter eventualities, while perceived as distinct possibilities (especially at dangerous times like Christmas), are also recognised to be much more unlikely. In any case, the possibility of violence does not stop people from travelling outside of their immediate environment when necessary, and it most certainly does not stop men drinking: after all, almost every drinking session ends with men going peacefully to bed.

Violence, or the threat of it, is also related to a variety of illegal money-making ventures: *jueteng*, rolling credit schemes and the drug scene. While phenomenally expensive, *shabu* [a synthetic drug popularly known as "ice" in the Western media and similar to amphetamines in effect], is fairly easily obtained on the streets of Manila. Although marijuana (also illegal) is cheaper and more common, it is *shabu* which is the target of police campaigns and media hysteria, and also a source of great profits to those involved in the trade. Whenever people talk of drug addicts, drug suppliers or the illicit drugs scene in general, it is almost always *shabu* to which they are referring.

> A man from the squatters' area was shot in the back of the head one night. I heard about it the next day, when I was told that, because of the execution style of the killing, it was most probably related to the drug trade. Nobody I knew was personally acquainted with the dead man, so this was all conjecture. However, although such killings occurred

> infrequently, it was commonly believed that the manner in which the man died was characteristic of drug slayings (beheading was another). The killing occurred at about 10pm, while I was attending a birthday party about fifty metres away. The music from that party was so loud that we had not heard anything — we were all unaware that anything untoward happened until the next day.
>
> On another occasion, a young man was found floating face-down in the canal near the high school. Although the official explanation was that the man had slipped into the canal while drunk the night before and drowned, several people who saw the body (it had already been removed by the time I went to look) said that the back of the man's head appeared to have been staved in with a heavy object. According to the gossip, the man was a known drug dealer, and this was obviously a drug-related slaying. However, Danny told me that he knew the man well, and that he was good [*mabait*], and was no drug dealer.

Whether or not the two killings really were in some way related to the drug trade that existed in the squatters' area and Bisig (it seemed to be more moribund in Asogue Street itself), it is interesting that public opinion immediately imputed such a relationship. In both cases, it is possible that the killer or killers were personally known to the victims, and also knew their way around the areas where the slayings occurred. This suggests some sort of consociateship between the killers and the victims, and the killers may also have been local residents.

In the incidents associated with drinking and possible drug dealing, the violence occurred near the victims' homes, in places where they should have been safest. Despite this, it was the far away events which created the strongest impression: almost everyone was able to point to examples where Filipinos had suffered (sometimes to the point of imprisonment and death) at the hands of employers in foreign countries. These stories were usually told to me at third hand or were nationally-publicised cases (such as the execution of Flor Contemplacion in 1995 in Singapore). They were rarely anyone known personally to my neighbours. Although it was the areas far away from the perceived safety of proximity of one's house and friends that were thought to be the most dangerous, incidents occurred more often closer to home.

By the same token, it was believed that the Third Kind and sorcerers were far more prevalent and far more dangerous in the provinces than in Manila. While people usually had a stock of stories to illustrate the presence of, say, *asuwang* or *kapre* in the countryside (and which also pointed out such entities' preferences for relatively more deserted places), these entities seemed to be largely inactive. By comparison, the *duwende* which lived in and around Asogue Street quite often caused sickness or interacted in some other way with human beings, even if they were considered to be less dangerous or malevolent than others of the Third Kind.

The objective actuality of relative degrees and frequency of danger is less significant than people's perceptions of that degree or frequency. The home ground of Asogue Street and familiar areas within the city are perceived to be far less likely haunts of powerful sorcerers or Third Kind than the countryside, while known areas of the provinces are themselves safer than unknown provinces or the world.

Chapter 7: Asogue Street in the World

To live in the world, to understand the world in which one lives: this is a matter of importance to the people who reside on or near Asogue Street, like their counterparts everywhere else. True, daily survival is an ongoing round of grinding work, soul-destroying searches for that work, a hunt for the money to purchase the necessities of food, clothing, shelter, entertainment expenses and, for the children, further education. And while the struggle to fulfil these basic needs takes up the majority of most people's waking hours — and worrying about the struggle and possible disasters takes up most of what time remains — still people ponder the nature of existence and their part in it.

To understand the universe, the world, requires that the world itself be knowable: that the information gleaned about the outside world from a variety of sources be rendered in terms that make sense to the would-be knowers. In other words, for it to be comprehensible the world must be depicted in ways that, while not necessarily conforming with culturally-based assumptions about existence, at least *address* those assumptions.

Where does the information about the world come from? And where, or what, are the sources of the cultural assumptions, the knowledge that people use to know? What are the sources of the attitudes that shape, but do not determine, thought and belief — attitudes which themselves can be recognised, accepted, rejected or modified. What is this knowledge used for? How does it shape — and how is it shaped by — practical, day-to-day, lived experience?

Sources of Knowledge

The residents of Asogue Street glean information about the world around them from a variety of sources, and people give more or less weight or credibility to different sources under different circumstances. Additionally, individuals are more or less credent depending on the source of that

information: followers of *El Shaddai* pay great attention to Br Mike Velarde's pronunciations on various matters, while others more-or-less sincerely believe what they read in the daily tabloids. Native healers are generally thought to be more knowledgeable about matters relating to the spirit world and sickness, while a very few people profess that regarding sickness and the Third Kind, they accept only what the doctors say.

Individuals' world-views have a number of influences. Tradition, as represented by *ang matatanda* [the old people], back in the provinces, is still thought to be a relevant guide to behaviour among kin. Nor has the centrality of the family and related concepts, such as *hiya* and *utang na loob*, seriously come into question in local perceptions of the wealthy and the middle class: whether nepotism is really widespread in business and government, people believe it to be so. Again, what the old people say, back in the provinces, provides many people with their main sources of lore regarding the Third Kind and sickness and its treatment. Although challenged by other sources of information and rival paradigms as to the nature of the universe (such as Western medicine), tradition and these rivals are generally accommodated within the same overarching, dynamic model of the universe (albeit one which varies from person to person). Instead of mutually-exclusive paradigms, each has its own sphere of influence, involving particular phenomena which it best explains. In part, this situation may have come about because traditional approaches retain much of their utility in the face of Western models: the old tried-and-true methods still work with many sorts of sickness and the family is still an effective bulwark against the uncertainty and potential danger of the wide world.

To Filipinos, the provinces are simultaneously "long ago and far away" and immediate, vibrant and contemporary. The particular way in which the provinces are compared to the here and now of Asogue Street depends on the situation and the person speaking. After all, people visit the provinces regularly in order to catch up with kin and friends — although remote (particularly the provinces in Mindanao), these are places which can be reached by ferry, and they are more familiar and congenial to most

informants than the business section of Makati in their own city. What the old people used to say about *duwende* or *pasma* may occasionally be seen as quaint or a little backward, but the beliefs and attitudes enshrined in these utterances are still common currency. The attitudes and actions are still relevant and they provide perfectly workable solutions to many of the problems encountered daily in health or subsistence.

At the same time, people still comment that the Philippines is part of the "modern" world, the world of science and technology; beliefs in the Third Kind or *asuwang* have no place in such a world. The unspoken assumption is that, as city dwellers (albeit poor ones), the residents of Asogue Street are more cosmopolitan than their rustic kin or compatriots back in the province. After all, there are more television sets, a more reliable electricity supply and greater hope of telephone connections in Manila than in the provinces — all visible markers of the greater ease and "modern-ness" of life in the city. Such comments were usually made to me by those who were comparatively more economically or politically successful than their neighbours and relatives: those with steady, well-paid jobs (and thus a disposable income) or those who had climbed the first few rungs of the Philippine political ladder. These were people who (in the former case) had the most to lose from "traditional" values, since the obligation to share one's wealth with one's kin would tend to hold them back or make it harder for them to send their children to university. It may also stem from a feeling of embarrassment that an educated foreigner wanted to discuss such backward superstitions with economic or political sophisticates, who are already uncomfortable with the small distinction in status and wealth that they had gained in comparison with their neighbours.

Even so, such people still consulted native healers in cases of spirit attack or for most injuries, and still put out the twelve round fruits on New Year's Eve in hopes of a round, fat and therefore prosperous new year.

It is apparent, then, that tradition is not the only source of information and attitudes. As has been mentioned in Chapter 3, the mass media is also an important carrier. "Mass media" here refers to the totality of printed

publications, television, radio and advertising via other means, such as roadside billboards.

Whether it is through a commercial for San Miguel beer, a respected news commentator's evening editorial on television, the weekly instalment of *Asuwang Komiks* or a party political broadcast, peoples' attitudes and the information which is processed by those attitudes are shaped by the mass media. Much of this constant input of externally-originated definitions of progress, the good life, the true and the beautiful, or simple common sense, is shaped and broadcast by those who want something from their audience: patronage, consumption, profit, votes. This self-interest of the outsiders is not lost on the recipients: if they are duped by government and businesses into wanting more of a particular version of the good life, then they are willing dupes who are also able to question whether or not this is the best for them. They make up their own minds about the official line on the Spratly Islands or about the characteristics of the *asuwang* as represented in the horror comics, just as they make up their own minds about what the old people say. However, as with tradition, the media is still influential, particularly when it portrays things about which the average Asogue Street resident has not had first-hand experience: life in other countries or how the wealthy live in Forbes Park. Informants tend to be sceptical when matters relate to things which they know well, but are more credulous about events and phenomena with which they have little direct experience.

Finally, there is gossip: the eyewitness account. As has already been described, Filipinos lay great stress on "seeing is believing". To see something with one's own eyes is to be convinced of its veracity, while the converse can also be used to justify an attitude: not seeing something is to thoroughly doubt its existence, or provides reasonable grounds for doubting. Of course, whether person A believes person B's eyewitness account depends on A's opinion of B. Are they reliable, responsible individuals? Good family men or mothers? Those who are thought irresponsible, bad parents or poor friends, nasty drunks — these are the people who, like

children, are not necessarily believed by others when they claim to have seen something out of the ordinary.

Much of people's knowledge of the outside world comes from eyewitness accounts: those people who, as seamen, overseas contract workers (OCWs), or as spouses have been to other countries and returned to tell the tale. Anything is possible in other countries, where there is more money, less poverty, greater wonders and fewer hardships (unless, of course, one is a Filipino employed as a labourer or maid in those countries). OCWs are accorded great respect in Asogue Street. They have gone to the ends of the earth and suffered great hardship, while also seeing many things that most Asogue Street residents will never see. They return with capital in the twin forms of experience and money, and have much to tell about what the world is like, although they do not always wish to talk about it.

OCWs provide Asogue Street residents with a link to the outside world, albeit a link to only a select few countries, and usually as seen from the lowest socioeconomic and status levels of those nations. Although there are Filipinos who emigrate to the United States or other economically developed countries as professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, these are statistically few and come from the upper echelons of Philippine society, not from among the ranks of urban slum dwellers and provincial peasantry. The OCWs with whom most informants are familiar go to Saudi Arabia as semi-skilled labourers, on cargo ships as seamen (never officers), to Singapore as maids, to Brunei or Japan as entertainers (often, but not always, a euphemism for prostitutes) or to the United States, Canada, Australia or Germany as wives, more rarely as husbands. To Filipino OCWs, being overseas is as much about hardship, discrimination and homesickness as it is about an opportunity to see some other part of the world and amass relatively large amounts of capital.

Much of what the residents of Asogue Street know about the outside world comes to them through OCWs who are neighbours, kin or friends. Much less suspect than the rare reports which filter though the media are the stories told by OCWs. These stories are vibrant, immediate and, most

importantly, true. Seeing is believing, eyewitness accounts — especially the eyewitness accounts of trusted, respected consociates — are the truth, and to be believed. Although much of what appears in the press is believed, because "if it wasn't true, they wouldn't print it", less weight is lent to such reports: the person you know is much more trustworthy than a faceless reporter or a complete stranger.

A Place for Everything

Those who do not live in, or are in some way associated with, Asogue Street are far less trustworthy than those who are known, such as neighbours, kin, *kumpadres*, *kumares* and the members of one's *barkada*. Just like locals, they may also be poor, but as outsiders they are still an unknown quantity. Indeed, it may be precisely because they are poor that they are potentially problematic: the rich and powerful are grasping and can cause troubles because they often have their own "goons" [E], or strong-men, and may also control the police. However, the poor may be desperate and willing to do anything, if it means a meal for their children or, for drug addicts, the next *shabu* score. Asogue Street residents know what it is to be poor, and know what their own kind are capable of: although it is a quiet and orderly place, many of the older men have pasts that were shady, and sometimes violent.

And yet, while outsiders may be watched with politely-veiled mistrust, this flies in the face of a strong imperative within Philippine culture, the ideal of hospitality.[143] Guests are sacrosanct, and should be given the best place, the best food, plied with coffee, soft drinks or liquor, entertained with conversation, feted to the family and neighbours. This was not just my experience as a foreigner, but I observed it whenever people visited from distant places; kin or old friends. Even on a more mundane level, a passerby may be invited to join an *inuman*, and must be invited if he is even a casual acquaintance. Most Asogue Street residents love to have guests, and are always willing to share what food they have — and for special occasions will even go into debt to buy food and drink for the guest that, for reasons of expense, they would otherwise normally never have.

They are hospitable to a fault, and proud of this tradition. Outsiders are welcome, even strangers with whom they share mutual friends, although complete strangers may be mistrusted and shunned. There is a tension in their treatment of the people of outside world, between the pleasure and honour of showing hospitality, and the knowledge that strangers are possible sources of danger. There is great shame attached to not showing hospitality, and there is also shame in not showing hospitality commensurate with the perceived importance of the guest. As a result, they will often apologise (with varying degrees of sincerity) for the poor food, accommodation or entertainment that they can provide to the visitor.

In terms of the spirit world, the Third Kind which lives outside the boundaries of everyday interaction is always the more dangerous — but also the more powerful. Certainly, the *duwende* and the White Lady have their powers, and are to be placated or avoided if at all possible. However, it is the *kapre*, the *sigbin* and the *asuwang* which are more likely to be recognisably malevolent and are certainly more powerful. They are also more exotic; found in far away places or in long-ago times, these creatures are the stuff of powerful horror stories or film, while the common or garden variety *duwende* is more likely to be encountered by locals, vendors and neighbours. Of course, the mass media draw on almost all of the Third Kind when producing supernatural literature.

Just as with the Third Kind, so too are sorcerers very rarely encountered in Manila. Although there are cases of sorcery in the city, most people agree that sorcerers are far more common, and far more powerful, in the far-flung provinces. Although they most commonly hail from Samar-Leyte or Siquijor, sorcerers can always be more frequently encountered in the countryside than in the city. *Usog* is fairly common in Asogue Street, but then *usog* is merely *usog*: reasonably common and basically simple to treat. *Usog* is theoretically life-threatening, but virtually always no more than a painful nuisance. *Kulam*, on the other hand, is dangerous, unsettling and far more likely to result in death, disfigurement or some sort of permanent character change if left untreated. Furthermore, *kulam* is the result of

drawing the malevolent attention of an exceptional individual, someone who has studied and undergone self-mortification in order to obtain the powers of a *mangkukulam*. By contrast, the *manguusog* has no real choice in the matter — they were most probably born with the ability as something inherent, rather than as something earned. They inflict injury on those around them by chance, more or less arbitrarily, in a manner reminiscent of the accidental nature of annoying a *duwende*: it is more a caprice of natural forces than the actions of a malevolent sentience.

Similarly, it is the healers further away who are the more powerful. The neighbourhood native healers have their strengths and are perfectly adequate for most of the run-of-the-mill health problems that are encountered. But for the highest levels of skill, ability or power, one must travel outside the boundaries of the everyday and into the realms of the little-known. There are great healers: these are far away, hard to get to — the objects of a pilgrimage or quest in order to seek health. Just as sickness is the result of an invasion of the body by an agent which has come from its own place "out there", so too is healing the result of acting on one's own body by seeking healing powers at a conceptual distance which is appropriate to, and commensurate with, the distance travelled by that which caused the illness.

Of course, the followers of *El Shaddai* believe that they are able to receive the very highest form of healing, directly from God (although really via Mike Velarde), by attending the Sunday sessions of their movement. This is much easier than travelling to Baguio or Panay; however, it still entails much greater effort than going down the road to see an *albularyo*, especially as the traffic around Manila on a Sunday evening is worsened by the large numbers of people attending the *El Shaddai* meeting. There is an effort involved in physically reaching the meetings which is commensurate with the healing power which can be obtained there; in this, the distance travelled is conceptually similar to a pilgrimage to a far province.

It is a consistent pattern that the further away one goes from Asogue Street, the more powerful, the more dangerous, the more efficacious and the more malign things become. In a sense, they become more interesting.

By the same token, residents of Asogue Street perceive the outside world as being more powerful politically and economically. Whereas they are lowly itinerant vendors, security guards or schoolteachers (when they have work), it is in the halls of power in *Malacañang*, or amidst the gleaming skyscrapers of the Makati financial district, that the truly significant events occur. Political and economic power are wielded in these shadowy, virtually foreign places; and events occur there which may or may not have far-reaching effects on their own lives, but which have at least the potential for profoundly altering their existence. They are aware that they are marginal to the centres of power and wealth, of ritual danger and ritual power.

This is particularly the case as far as their perception of the United States is concerned. Although Spain ruled the Philippines for several hundred years, it was the Americans who conquered the Philippines at the turn of the century and then administered it as a colony until just after the end of World War II. It was the Americans who liberated the Philippines from the Japanese, and it is the United States which provides the Philippines with its role models in everything from fashion and sport to forms of government and economic models. For all the talk of Hispanicised Catholicism and the rhetoric of "Asian" or "malay" culture and values, it is largely to the United States that the Philippines — and Filipinos — looks in terms of culture, mass entertainment and, for want of a better phrase, *styles* of doing things. Caucasians are automatically "Joe" in the Philippines: the assumption is that any white person is an American.

And it is to the United States that Filipinos aspire to travel, to settle. Better, perhaps, to be a taxi driver in Milwaukee than an engineer in Manila. Most everyone told me that the Philippines had no future, or, at best, a rank, over-populated and polluted one. Certainly not a place to bring up one's children. If they could go elsewhere, they would — just as so many of their wealthier and luckier compatriots have done and continue to do. They know

the chances of this happening are slim, and it is merely poverty that keeps them in the Philippines, not necessarily patriotism or loyalty. Meanwhile, in the United States (and perhaps in other countries), the future will always be bright.

Ultimately, the further away one goes from the centre, Asogue Street, the more powerful things, people, events and places become. This power may be quantified or defined in a variety of ways, but is most clearly apparent with regard to the Third Kind, to sorcerers and healers. Informants are well aware that there are also weaker entities — particularly *duwende* — and less-powerful healers in far away places, much the same as they exist around Asogue Street. The important point is that the more powerful entities, healers and sorcerers are *not* found in the immediate vicinity, or, if they were once there, it was a long time ago.

Just as moving physically move away from Asogue Street brings the traveller closer to the more powerful healers, sorcerers or Third Kind, so too can one move temporally away from the present and achieve much the same thing. Fifty years ago, Tugatog was a mixture of plantations and wilderness, a rural area. The trees and glades abounded with spirits of both good and ill intent. People could only tell me a handful of stories about Lolo Badong's encounters with the Third Kind in those early days — but they assumed that there were many more which only Badong knew, stories they had heard when younger and had now forgotten. Badong himself too old to tell those stories — and he died during the fieldwork period. Yet the assumption that the Third Kind were more active, more prevalent and more varied, is itself important. Although no one ever said it in so many words, the attitude could be summed up as: "Things were more dangerous, more alive and powerful when only Lolo Badong and Nati lived here".

In similar fashion, people's grandparents always seemed to have more potent *anting-anting*, not the cheaper, less-powerful varieties that are now bought in markets, but the "teeth of lightning" or stingray tails, obtained through much personal hardship and courage, the result of a quest.

Again, people better understood the ways of the Third Kind, of sickness and healing in the old days. Those dimly-remembered precepts of the old people back in the provinces were, perhaps, once part of vibrant bodies of lore. However, those fragments of wisdom were probably always nothing more than dimly-remembered, bits and pieces handed down. In return for losing the central parts of that lore (if there ever was such a central part), Filipinos have been offered "science" and "progress": diesel fuel, television and the grail-like quest for a telephone line in the street, possibly even a telephone in one's home.[144] These are not really compensations: beyond free vaccinations and moderately-priced antibiotics, most advances in Western medicine are too expensive to be of much use to the average Asogue Street resident. Likewise, the internet and cellular telephones are toys for the wealthy. And yet progress is perceived as the only way out of poverty and economic backwardness, if a not particularly palatable way. It is a nettle that, like it or not, must be grasped if one (or one's children) is to have a chance of escape from poverty — and even then, there are no guarantees.

People hark back to the 1960s and 1970s when they say that life was, in some ways, easier than it is today. Food, clothing, shelter and entertainment were cheaper, work was easier to come by. In almost the same breath, they will then go on to say how much harder things were, as well: parents were stricter, children were brought up to be more respectful of their elders, parental beatings were more frequent: at least two of my informants left home and lived on the streets while still young boys in order to escape overly authoritarian fathers.

This ambivalent nature of memories of the past, nostalgia mixed with a keen understanding of the hardships of the past and likely difficulties of the future has been found by others writing on the Filipino urban poor:

> Life in the past was so devoid of satisfaction that in their perception of the future expectations of more failure and defeat are interwoven with anxious hopes against all hope. Wishfully, some parents perceive their children to be the sole redeeming

> factor in the family's future escape from chronic misery. (Decaesstecker 1975:123)

Note, though, that even where things were harder in the past, they were associated with stronger family structures and greater respect for one's elders — the suggestion may be that in some ways, those hard old days were better, more honest, than the present, even as the future may be better for the children, but probably will not be.

The Periphery and the Centre

The present and the immediate vicinity, therefore, are most often referred to as in some way less dangerous than the times and places further away. The centre safe, while the periphery is represented as the source or centre of power and danger. For the residents of Asogue Street, the street is their place, and they have a right to be there, to live there, whether this right accrues to them through long-standing occupation, or through kinship or close friendship with someone who is recognised as holding such a right. No one in the area would question the right of other residents to be there, because everyone can claim one or another of these rights, and because people become accustomed to seeing the same faces. Only the government might contest their longstanding residency, and this possibility is thought by residents to be very remote.

If, as Douglas (1969) argues, purity or impurity is as much a question of matter "in" or "out of" place — that is, its relation to surroundings and to other things — as it is about the inherent qualities of that matter, then the residents of Asogue Street are not impure. They may be poor, they may have only the merest of stakes in wider society, they may be excluded from the opportunities and luxuries and privileges available to the wealthy or to the middle class of the Philippines (or of the West), yet they are in their own province. It may be marginal, at the edge of a society of consumer goods, yet they are part of the majority of people in Manila — the poor who share neither in the goods of the minority of the affluent, nor are allowed to speak in the great debates about the nation.

In a Durkheimian sense, the spirit world, if not the actual religion, of Asogue Street residents mirrors this ambivalent structure of their society. They are at once in their own place, where they ought to be, and to move from Asogue Street to a place where one is unknown is allegorically similar to making something impure by moving it from its designated relations to a foreign suite. Informants would not think of people becoming pure or impure by going elsewhere or returning: yet such movements have the same potential effect as impurity (itself a movement to "out of place-ness"): danger.

In the same manner, entities, forms of illness, causes of sickness and sources of power (for healing or otherwise) have their own more-or-less discrete zones. Things are to be found where they ought to be: native healers around the corner, *asuwang* at the furthest reaches of human settlement, *duwende* almost everywhere (but only in the Philippines). Entities rarely move from their allotted and ascribed zones or regions. The further away from Asogue Street, the more powerful they are, the greater the possible danger if someone moves to them, or vice-versa. In this sense, they are strangers because they come from a long way away, not because they are not known — but it amounts to the same thing.

Danger is not the result of powerful entities in their own place, it is the cause of breaches of the body corporal or the body familial resulting from, or as part of, the movement of a person or entity from one place to another. As long as things and people stay in their own places — Asogue Street residents near Asogue Street, *asuwang* in Capiz — then there is no problem. Nothing can or will harm anything else. It is only when something or someone goes to a place to which it does not belong, in which it is not known, that the potential for danger arises. Take the example of the story of *Teñente Gimo*: a schoolteacher goes with her friend for a visit to the friend's family, who turn out to be *asuwang* and, as such creatures will, they attempt to kill and eat the schoolteacher. The danger arises because the schoolteacher goes away from her accustomed places, and travels to a zone where she is not known, where she does not belong. It is a lonely place, a deserted place: the place of *asuwang*, not people.

Teñente Gimo is supposedly based on a true story, yet it is also a tale which emphasises that danger comes from people travelling to places where they do not belong. Several people told me the story at one time or another, and there was never any suggestion on their part that the schoolteacher had been in error for travelling to an unknown place, because she was travelling with a friend, who should have been trustworthy. It is precisely because travel entails going out of one's one areas (even if it is only while one is *en route*), that a *kasama*, a companion, is necessary. As a side issue, it might be mentioned that, while the *asuwang* in the story of *Teñente Gimo* were true to their carnivorous natures in that they planned to devour the teacher, their behaviour flies in the face of Philippine hospitality: one should always feed one's guests, never eat them.

By the same token, to annoy a *kapre*, one generally must harm its tree. This entails that the human must have gone to a lonely or deserted place to find the tree in which the *kapre* has made its home. Before the *kapre* will ever retaliate against the perpetrator, the human must have travelled to a place where he or she should not have been.

Of course, the reverse also applies. The potential for danger arises when the Third Kind or sorcerers leave their own places and seek out people. Thus, for instance, *kulam* [sorcery] is in part dangerous because it entails the movement of a sorcerer's power into Asogue Street when the sorcerer attacks his or her victim. By definition, the most powerful sorcerers come from far away, especially the island of Siquijor and the province of Samar-Leyte. For them to attack someone in Asogue Street, it must originate from very far away. The attention of the sorcerer moves to the local from the periphery. The most powerful of the *mangkukulam* are far away, but they are also far away *because* they are the most powerful. Although Eden was the victim of a sorcerous attack which originated nearby, the *mangkukulam* who attacked her did so in order to stop her moving away to Manila. Josie was victimised by a *mangkukulam* only some time after the person who was identified as the sorcerer had moved away from Asogue Street.[145] In order to treat this case, Josie visited a *manggagamot* in Tondo, a trip which is not

particularly difficult, but with travel time of up to an hour each way in traffic, it is somewhat inconvenient.

Unlike *kulam*, *usog* originates close by. The *manguusog* is a known quantity, a close friend or neighbour. It might be fatal if left untreated, and it is painful, but it is really only a minor nuisance. The pain is rarely so severe that victims are unable to walk about easily, and the treatment is quick, with immediate results. One need only visit the *manguusog* in his or her house down the street to receive the saliva and sign of the cross on forehead and stomach that will end the pain, followed more often than not by a shame-faced and self-deprecatory apology from the *manguusog*. The person responsible for the *usog* lives nearby, and perhaps it is because they live close to the victim, and neither has left their place when the attack occurs, that it is so minor.

Although *duwende* can hurt people or sicken them, the resulting illness is rarely severe — although the pain or debilitations are often much more serious than is the case with *usog* — and treatment is as close, as cheap and hopefully as rapid as a few visits to one of the healers nearby. Of course, there are exceptions, and such illnesses may require the attention of more powerful healers further away, but such cases are rare, and the prognosis is one of eventual recovery, so long as the victim is not so foolhardy as to try to mix Western medical techniques with illnesses caused by the Third Kind.

The outer zones of the Asogue Street resident's conceptual world are not more dangerous because they are less pure — after all, people seek to go out into that world to make their fortunes, and do not come back defiled because of that experience[146] — nor are they more dangerous because there is greater power there (although there *is* perceived to be greater power at the periphery). Increased power is not in itself more dangerous, although repercussions from interacting with those powers are likely to be more severe.

Other Places, Other Perspectives

The experiences and world views of the urban poor in Manila generally and Asogue Street particularly — as portrayed with regards to sickness and healing — are singular. No other place or people, not even in a neighbouring slum or squatment of the same city, can ever be exactly the same, if only because the individuals, their histories and the local geography which make up this locus are never exactly replicated anywhere else. Even so, the experiences of the residents of Asogue Street, the social world which they call their home, has its analogues in other times and other places.

The world of Asogue Street is singular, but not unique: the patterns which can be seen in that small, sooty corner of the world are reproduced elsewhere, with local variations of flavour, colour and personality. To provide a basis for comparison, it is useful to consider the findings of studies from other parts of the region; two in Indonesia, one in Thailand and one in Papua New Guinea. In The Wheel of Fortune, Jellinek's (1991) study of Kebun Kacang, a poor urban kampung of Jakarta, the author emphasises the competition for scarce resources which comprises much of the daily activities of the urban poor. In their scrabbling to survive, the kampung dwellers make the greatest investments in social relationships in those living immediately nearby. Although the people who live closest may be kin, the over-riding priority for investment in social contacts is proximity, not kinship (1991:53); one turns to one's neighbours for aid in times of need, whether or not these are kin (1991:39-40).

Jellinek argues that since the kampung dwellers must expend almost all their resources in scratching a living from a city which has become more and more hostile to already insecure informal-sector subsistence activities (1991:91-96), the individual dweller's attempts to increase security by cultivating good ties with their immediate neighbours actually lead to a loss of kampung-wide organisation. "It seemed the more effort kampung dwellers put into making their immediate environment more secure by developing personal ties, the less time and energy was left for joint activities on a broader basis" (1991:53). Thus, the kampung itself is no community, but

rather an acephalous collection of disparate neighbourhoods, albeit ones with more or less porous boundaries.

This lack of community beyond the immediate environs, the emphasis on proximity over kinship, can be seen in Asogue Street as well as in the kampung. As with Jellinek's field site, the residents of Asogue Street place great store on kin ties, and attempt to incorporate those neighbours who are not kin as much as possible into a kinship system through fictive techniques: baptismal and wedding sponsors (the *kumpadres* and *kumares*); the *barkada* and drinking sessions; general good neighbourliness. In both cases, although lip-service is paid to the residents' perception that traditionally (in the provinces), primacy is always given to kin relations, in the urban setting it is proximity, overlaid with a veneer of quasi-kinship, that is the basis for networks of alliance, security and safety. "The growing scarcity of goods and constant struggle to survive in an increasingly commercialized world caused the former values of sharing to become obsolete" (1991:39).

In both cases, the urban poor subsist largely within the informal sector — unregulated and often non-legal activities — against a backdrop of growing insecurity. In Indonesia, this growing insecurity is, according to Jellinek, generated by the growth and growing affluence of the middle classes: as the "moral majority" changes its tastes regarding appearances, propriety and what can and cannot be done or seen in the public arena, the rather shabby activities of the informal sector are pushed further and further into the corners of society, policed and regulated to the brink of non-existence.[147] Unlike the 1970s resurgence in the Indonesian economy, which led to the rise of the middle class and middle class attitudes (Jellinek 1991:91-96), the Philippines of 1995 had not as yet begun to enjoy the economic growth rates more usually associated with the Asian "tiger economies". Although there is a middle class out there, somewhere, in Manila, the informal sector is still a large and flourishing area of the city's economy. However, employment in this sector remains insecure and vulnerable, thanks to a sluggish formal economy, with a correspondingly

large pool of unemployed and unskilled labour attempting to eke out a living in the metropolis.

The lack of community organisation beyond the informal and proximate is just as evident in Asogue Street as in the kampung. Over-arching structures were largely non-existent and, where they existed by virtue of external sources of support or maintenance (such as barangay or municipal-level organisations), these were often moribund or actively avoided because of perceptions of corruption or the self-seeking reputations of the politicians who headed or were involved in them. One exception was the Department of Health-sponsored *Libreng Sangkap/Sangkap Pinoy* program; however, even this was funded by the Philippine Government, and local people only acted as volunteers on the day. As an ongoing exercise, it neither employed nor needed Asogue Street residents. Of local, cross-neighbourhood groups, there were none, barring the highly informal and occasionally volatile *barkadas*.

Asogue Street residents, in common with Kebun Kacang residents, are often mystified by the ways of the outside world, particularly their own government, or choose to retreat into a protective cynicism (not without reason) regarding the motives of the government and its elected representatives. However, unlike Kebun Kacang in the 1970s (see, for instance, 1991:122-123), Asogue Street residents have greater access to external sources of information: television, radio, a free press, even the ubiquitous *komiks* (in which advertising space was occasionally purchased by the government, particularly the DOH, in order to publicise one or another program).

As with both Asogue Street and Kebun Kacang, the kampung of Ledok — in which Guinness (1986) lived — was originally a rural area, close to an urban settlement, in this case the old imperial centre of Yogyakarta. As with the other two areas, rural Ledok was progressively urbanised and transformed into a squatter settlement, the result of increased pressure for living space as the nearby city expanded under an increasing influx of rural migrants seeking better opportunities and better lives in the city (Guinness

1986). As people moved into the area following the 1920s, shady groves were cut down to make room for human habitations and the spirits which lived there have moved on, fleeing from humans, "...in search of the cool, dark and quiet spots they prefer" (Guinness 1986:9-10) — as with spirit beings in Asogue Street, most local spirits prefer to avoid overmuch contact with humans.

Whereas Jellinek's account stressed the disorganisation and relative lack of cohesion to be found in urban kampung society, Guinness reports a greater degree of social harmony. Social harmony is encapsulated in the concept of *rukun*, which he glosses as, among other things, "getting along". It incorporates polite behaviour, formality and avoidance towards certain types of kin and neighbours, as well as friendliness and a willingness to provide aid in times of need (1986:131-166). According to Guinness, kampung society is characterised by social harmony — *rukun* — either as an actual, living fact of life in the kampung, or as an ideal to be aimed for. At one level, this suggests that Ledok life is much more harmonious than the disorganised and competitive existence to be found in Kebun Kacang. Of course, life is just as precarious for the urban poor of Ledok as it is in Kebun Kacang or Asogue Street, and the social harmony which forms a centrepiece of Guinness' study actually exists at a level of social organisation which is lower than the dis-organisation reported by Jellinek or encountered by myself. Social harmony, getting along with people and behaving correctly in a social setting, is just as important in Asogue Street or Kebun Kacang as it is in Ledok: and *rukun* does not, of itself, entail the existence of higher-order forms of social organisation. Indeed, if Jellinek is correct and the effort expended by slumdwellers to cultivate and maintain good relations with one's immediate neighbours actually serves to retard efforts at larger-scale organisation, then an emphasis by slumdwellers on *rukun* may indicate a corresponding lack of such organisation.

Guinness' account of *rukun* is strongly reminiscent of the important Filipino concept of *pakikisama*, which places a strong, positive moral premium on smooth interpersonal relationships and avoidance of conflict.

Although there are differences of detail between the two concepts, the same broad values are there: the importance of getting along, the high theoretical value placed on kinship and the high practical value placed on proximity.

Poorer than the residents of Asogue Street or the Ledok kampung dwellers are the people portrayed in Thorbek's (1987) study of women in Bangkok's Khlong Toey slum, Voices from the City. Thorbek's study follows closely the lives and problems of women, which she found much easier to access than male concerns, and thus provides a useful counterpoint to this thesis, in which men's attitudes are examined in far more detail than that of the women. Just as Thorbek found access to male pursuits, with its potential for rapport with informants more difficult (1987:5-6), so too did I find that, as a male, achieving the friendship and confidence of men was much easier (and less prone to misinterpretation) than women.

The Khlong Toey slumdwellers lived with far greater impermanance than the inhabitants of Kebun Kacang, Ledok or Asogue Street. Although established in 1937, it had been the target for a series of on-again, off-again mass evictions and attempted relocations in order to clear the site, the last being as recently as 1982 (Thorbek 1987:34-37). Thus, while individuals in any of the poor communities discussed so far might come and go, it was only in Khlong Toey that actual site of the slum was seen by its inhabitants as being in any way under real and at times imminent danger of dissolution.

Virtually all of the women in Thorbek's study had migrated to Bangkok from the countryside or much smaller cities. Generally, they had come seeking work to provide money to support the family farm (many farms are heavily enmeshed in cash crop production and are unable to support a family without additional sources of cash income (1987:14-18,87-88), or to stay with or seek a husband or boyfriend. Work was badly-paid, under very poor conditions and with little or no job security, and included piecework, domestic assistance, prostitution or scavenging plastic for resale. The women maintained strong ties with their rural relatives, returning for religious festivals, visits or emergencies.

Thorbek makes it clear that, within Khlong Toey, there was a gradual unravelling of the Thai family unit. Rural Thai women bring a certain amount of land with them to a marriage, and this land is often crucial for the ongoing viability of the family. Within the slum, neither men nor women have any land (or similar resource) to bring to a marriage, and economic survival depends on the incomes of family members. Male incomes are almost invariably higher than female (even for the same work), and thus men earn a proportionally greater cash income than their partners (1987:55-56,61-65). At the same time, men argue that any income they earn is their own, to be spent as they see fit, often on minor wives, motorcycles, gambling and drinking (the latter two are the main male social activities). The relevance of the family lessened for men even as women became more dependant on male income (1987:88-93). Some proportion of a man's income is handed over to the woman for household maintenance; however, this amount was highly variable from family to family.

While men earned greater amounts of money than women (which may or may not be spent on the household according to male whim), the women were expected to both keep down a job, if possible, and maintain a household. The work of rearing children, cooking and cleaning, coupled with a six-day-a-week job was often an unbearable workload. Despite this, women rarely left their husbands: wives stated their husbands had threatened to find them and bring them back if they should ever leave.

Thus, whereas marriage as an institution in Khlong Toey remained, the structural forces that served to render the family a viable economic entity were being eroded. By comparison, marriage displayed strength and resilience in Asogue Street. While the same lack of land or other resources applied to marriages involving at least one Asogue Street resident, families were not subjected to the same tendency among men to keep an overly significant proportion of their income. While women in the Philippines were generally underpaid compared to male colleagues in the same job, the female Asogue Street residents were generally employed in professions (i.e., teaching or as receptionists) which were more secure and better-paid than

the work more typically done by men. In general, women brought as much, or greater income into the household. While men generally kept a portion of their income for themselves, this was for drinking and cigarettes: unlike Thai men, they did not generally indulge in expensive pastimes such as gambling. Men with secure, well-paid jobs were employed as seamen or overseas in Brunei or Saudi Arabia and thus absent much of the time.

As in Khlong Toey, women were the glue that held the family together, whether husbands were present and only occasionally employed, or absent for long periods on overseas contracts. Yet the Thai men in Thorbek's account appear almost indifferent to their wives or family, while Filipino men, for the most part, tended to be very interested and involved with family matters. Certainly, they seem to have been far more willing to assist with housework and child minding on a regular basis than Thai men.

As with Khlong Toey, Asogue Street residents did not organise in the face of pressures from outside authority, both displaying cynicism towards government and business while at the same time being acutely aware of their own powerlessness.

In terms of history, social organisation and observable conditions, both the Indonesian and Thai examples, perhaps unsurprisingly, broadly resemble those to be found in Asogue Street. Despite local variations, the situation is much the same for residents in either kampung and in the barangay. By comparison, Strathern's (1975) study of Hagen migrants to Port Moresby, No Money On Our Skins, portrays a quite different set of conditions. Whereas the urban areas in my own field site, along with those of Jellinek and Guinness, were reasonably bounded, former agricultural areas with up to fifty years of continuous in-migration from the provinces, the Port Moresby of Strathern's account differs considerably. Mt Hagen migrants are generally younger men who go to the city in search of work or better opportunities than are to be found in the countryside (1975:15-58). At the same time, they usually keep at the back of their minds the assumption that they will return to their home villages in the Hagen region, to return to the

socially and — usually — economically more rewarding activities of coffee growing and pig raising.

Hagen migrants to Port Moresby, unlike others, tend to be young (1975:77) and generally plan to return to their homes after a temporary stay. Only the older men, who feel they have forfeited their chance to become involved in *bisnis* (1975:59) consider Moresby as a permanent home. In effect, Hageners in Moresby are still very much Hageners, whose focus is on the home village, even though they may strike up friendships with individuals from other regions while working at the capital. The ties among province-mates appear to be much stronger in Strathern's account than those which I encountered in Asogue Street, where a shared provincial background — while often an element in easing sociability or finding employment — was only one of a number of resources that newcomers could utilise. In effect, the Hagener population of Moresby was a largely shifting, ephemeral one: unlike Manila, Jakarta or Yogyakarta, the provincial migrants encountered no "backbone" of long-term settlers who had made a home and become involved in the daily life of the neighbourhood and the community (1975:85-87,167-170).

At the same time, it is worth noting that Strathern's account was published in 1975, when migration to the city from Mount Hagen was still a relatively recent and small, if growing, phenomenon (see, for instance, 1975:241-424). By contrast, provincials had been settling in the slums and urban kampungs of Manila, Jakarta and Yogyakarta for between fifty and one hundred years, so that the third, fourth and fifth-generation migrants could easily consider themselves natives of the city, albeit with kinship ties which extended both into the provinces and into the past. It would be interesting to re-examine the current situation among Hageners in the city, now more than twenty years on, to determine if they have begun to colonise on a more permanent basis or integrate more strongly into the wider community.

Unlike Hagen migrant workers, the kampung settlers tended to reiterate Asogue Street residents' concerns at their own powerlessness in

the face of distant governments, apparently bent on excluding them from the means of subsistence which could be obtained through the informal sector of the economy. Where survival is precarious and the means of survival exist only at the apparent whim of external forces, it is perhaps understandable that slumdwellers exhibit a degree of suspicion regarding outsiders. They are potentially dangerous, and not to be trusted.

Poverty of Culture

When Renato Rosaldo was a graduate student, one of his professors attempted to dissuade him from doing fieldwork in the Philippines, because they "lacked culture" (Rosaldo 1988:77). Apart from the ethnic minorities in remote mountain fastnesses and the Muslim-inspired cultural patterns in evidence in Mindanao, it is sometimes hard to see where the "culture" is, especially in the lowlands, in the cities and — most specifically for my thesis — in the slums in those cities. It *is* there, it does exist, although it is not always as immediately obvious as a Javanese shadow-puppet play or a Trobriand *kula* ring, simply because, to a westerner, it is not always exotic. It is Americanised, it is Hispanicised. Where are the indigenous values, beliefs, rituals, paraphernalia?

Rosaldo argues that lowland Filipinos, being like "us" ("us" for Rosaldo presumably means educated North Americans), have similarly been labelled as culturally transparent. They lack the paraphernalia of established traditional cultures and have become postcultural and very much like North Americans through the Philippines' long relationship with the United States.

It is both unnecessary and wasted effort to attempt to separate the "indigenous" aspects of Philippine culture — or *cultures*, since there was no unifying state or overlord prior to Spanish occupation — from the Spanish-Catholic and North American accretions. Philippine culture is as much about baseball caps and basketball as it is about the Virgin Mary or *jai alai*, or about earth spirits and *asuwang*. It is a culture which is changed, added to or removed from, over time, in periods of great upheaval and in the midst of stunning poverty. It draws upon, or is imposed upon by, multinational

corporations and their marketing techniques, television and the printing press, as much as (and sometimes more so than) traditions handed down by word-of-mouth, from grandparent to child and grandchild. Even in this latter case, the medium may not be face-to-face transmission of heritage, but via telephones and letters — the medium is not the message, but it does modify it, subtly or not-so-subtly.

Life in Asogue Street was in many ways a close reflection of the social world reported by Jellinek (1991), Guinness (1986) and Thorbek (1987). Whether in Ledok, Kebun Kacang or Khlong Toey, there is a similar emphasis on the need to get along with other people — avoidance of conflict with near neighbours was a major factor affecting everyday behaviour. At the same time, both Jellinek and Thorbek were at pains to emphasise the relative disorganisation and lack of social cohesion which obtained in these squatter settlements. Such lack of cohesion was also present in Ledok and in Asogue Street, although in both cases it was apparently a far less important aspect of social existence.

In all cases, there was little or no political organisation in the settlements. In part, this may be due to the relatively marginalised and disempowered nature of life among the urban poor: certainly in Asogue Street, a common attitude towards political organisation was that such activities were doomed from the start, that the political forces which operated in Manila, as represented by the police, the courts, local politicians and the government were too powerful, too corrupt and too motivated by self-interest for local political movements to ever achieve anything much. The relative transience of a sizeable minority of Asogue Street residents may also be a factor mitigating against the formation of organised political movements.

As with Asogue Street, the residents of the Indonesian and Thai communities earned their livings in a variety of ways, occasionally in the formal but more often in the informal sectors, in activities ranging from legal to semi-legal and illegal. Employment was short-term, ill-paid and insecure, dead ends which did not necessarily provide skills that were transferable to other workplaces. In contradiction to Khlong Toey, the women of Asogue

Street were often better-paid than men, and were more likely to be working in professions (albeit at the lowest rungs of the professional ladder) than their spouses or boyfriends. Men with secure employment tended to be in trades. As with their counterparts in Indonesia and Thailand, the Asogue Street workers rarely had incomes that could be called prosperous; rather, they were simply trying to avoid falling below the level of survival.

Only in Khlong Toey was the instution of marriage under apparent threat. In Asogue Street, as in Ledok and Kebun Kacang, marriage was still a strong, and strongly-supported, institution. While some marriages were unsuccessful, and the social forces operating in the slum or squatment were a factor, it appears that in these cases the stresses caused by economic hardship served to widen cracks that were the result of other factors. In Asogue Street, the only marriage to collapse without subsequent reconciliation during my fieldwork occurred in one of the more prosperous families, and grew out of a rift between the husband and his son, rather than he and his wife.

Little comparison can be made between the spirit world as it is perceived around Asogue Street and on the streets of Jakarta, Yogyakarta or Bangkok. The literature presented here does not pay close attention to folk beliefs regarding sickness or healing and so it is difficult to ascertain whether such matters were of less importance to these other urban poor or whether the attention of the anthropologists was more closely applied to other matters. In Asogue Street, the spirits did not occupy centre stage in the ongoing drama of life; however, they were certainly present and their actions did cause sickness.

The world's urban population is growing, and the proportion of the world's population which is both poor and urbanised is increasing. Under the pressures of survival in a wage-subsistence (rather than crop-subsistence) economy and mass advertising, there is little room for the traditional cultures with which anthropology often concerns itself. The carriers of culture in the slums are both the victims, and the cunning exploiters, of external pressures. So Coca-Cola and CNN form as much a part of a Filipino slum dweller's

cultural background or heritage as do tales of *Teñente Gimo* or *usog* — partly because it is foisted on them by big business, and partly because they want it. They take what they want, and try to ignore the rest.

Summary: Healthy Rats and Sick People

In this thesis, I have argued that the residents of a street in Metro Manila, slum dwellers, perceive the world as being composed of a series of zones stretching out from the person and the home, via the street and the neighbourhood, to the outside world. These zones are inhabited by a variety of spirit beings who generally become more and more powerful the further away their zone is conceptually (which also includes distance in time), rather than geographically, located from Asogue Street. The centre of the home, the compound and the street is the area of least power and greatest marginality, while residents see the periphery of their world as the centre of greatest power.

Danger, the risk of damage to oneself or the members of one's family, is related to the power of such entities. However, the power of these entities does not in itself create the potential for danger unless there is a movement from one zone to another. If someone travels from Asogue Street, the further away they go in this conceptual framework, the more likely they are to encounter powerful entities and, by moving out of their own place and into another, they effectively endanger themselves by being exposed to such power. Conversely, the movement of an entity from their place into Asogue Street — or the compound, or the home — entails the potential for danger, mainly to Asogue Street residents, because outsiders are, by definition, more powerful (the further away one goes, the greater the power).

In order to illustrate this, I have focused on the beliefs related to sickness and healing. I have shown that sickness [*sakit*] is caused by a variety of entities or environmental conditions, which invariably act by invading the body, such as the entry of excessive hot or cold elements, or the work of *mikrobia*. In general, the sicknesses which are caused by hot/cold imbalances or people or Third Kind which may be encountered on

an almost everyday basis (consider *usog* or *duwende*) are not excessively threatening: the danger is less. It follows that treatment is generally simple, easily-available and cheap. By contrast, entities which exist further away, because they are further away from Asogue Street, are also more powerful. Encountering such entities, whether through movement out into the world or by their moving towards the street (such as a sorcery attack at a distance) tends to be more dangerous. *Asuwang* and *mangkukulam* are far more dangerous than *duwende* or *manguusog.* They can kill where the more commonly-encountered dangers only debilitate. Thus, treatment also entails greater effort, perhaps including travel away from Asogue Street in order to seek more powerful healers or cures.

These findings open a number of potential avenues for further research. Although I am confident that most urban poor Filipinos would hold similar views regarding sickness and healing, danger and distance to those explicated here, it would be valuable to conduct comparative research involving a number of urban and rural poor communities. This would perhaps highlight the variations between urban communities across Metro Manila and in other major Philippine cities, and contrast these findings with the variations which may occur in the provinces. Such work would be even more illuminating if contrasted with the beliefs of members of the Filipino upper- and middle-classes. Affluent, better-travelled and perhaps better informed, their views of the relationship between danger, distance and entities moving from one place to another would provide a depth of information not currently available.

This thesis has had a great deal to say about people, healthy or otherwise, but very little to say about rats. Rats may steal food or occasionally bite children, yet they are not so much dangerous as a nuisance. Although Asogue Street residents may dislike the fact, the rats and mice belong where they are as much as anything or anybody else. Certainly, most people might wish that such vermin belonged to the farthest reaches of the world, rather than the house, the compound and the street, and that the rats had stayed "out there".

Although they survive by hiding in the interstices, the cracks and crevices of the human built environment of Asogue Street, they are just as much at home there as are the humans. They do not come from far places, nor do humans need to travel in order to encounter them. No transgression of the conceptual zones of the world occurs in order for humans and rats to meet; and it follows that rats are not perceived as powerful, as sources of potential danger, any more than *duwende* or the White Lady are.

It is true that contact with rats, or with food fouled by rats, may lead to sickness, and serious sicknesses at that. Yet it is recognised that such illnesses are caused more by *mikrobia* than by the rats *per se*.

Yet the fact remains that, by staying close to the residents of Asogue Street, rats are not violating the conceptual order of the world; they are recognised as animals of the house, if unwelcome ones. Such rats are not to be eaten, although field rats, those from far away, may be — yet it is doubtful whether anyone who was not starving would do so. Classifying them as animals of the house is a tacit acceptance of the fact that, try as they might, the people of Asogue Street will never actually exterminate the ever-healthy rats, even as they themselves remain thin.

Notes

[1] From the German maxim, "*Stadtluft Macht Frei*". In mediaeval Germany, if a peasant escaped to a city and stayed there for a year and a day, breathing city air for that time, they were deemed to have been released from their vassaldom and became free city dwellers. The saying suggests a parallel with the 20th Century migration, especially marked in developing countries, from the dull and depressed rural hinterland to the imagined freedom and wealth of the city.

[2] I used the phrase "fat rats and thin people" as the basis for the title of this thesis. In general, notions of fatness and health go together, to a degree each entails the other. At the same time, to be thin is to be unhealthy, and to be unhealthy is to be thin. Thus, "fat" becomes "healthy", and "thin" becomes "sick".

[3] Telecommunication is also difficult. At the time of my fieldwork, there were two telephones in Asogue Street, both privately-owned, and another private telephone (available for hire for local calls only) around the corner. One of the two telephones in Asogue Street suffered severe wiring problems. Since I completed fieldwork, new lines have been installed in Asogue Street (in line with President Fidel Ramos' plan to increase private access to the telephone system, particularly for poorer people), and at least two more households in my home compound have had telephones installed.

[4] However, almost every parent confided to me at some time or another that they hoped that, should they work hard enough to provide their children with higher education (perhaps tertiary-level professional qualifications), then the next generation might be able to "have something better": perhaps rising into the middle classes.

[5] My overarching theoretical orientation is essentially following Bourdieu, the Bourdieu of Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977). Although I will not present my data explicitly in his terms, the way in which I attempt to comprehend sociocultural phenomena is influenced by his theoretical approach. Without attempting to describe Bourdieu's contribution to social theory, I wish to acknowledge my intellectual debt to his work.

[6] During my fieldwork, another *sari-sari* store opened for business, one which competed aggressively with the other stores in the street, offering a slight reduction on most goods and a generally lower price for items paid for in cash, rather than credit. The other store owners found that the tactics of the newer store bit into their profits, and caused some frustration.

[7] In conversation, many Filipinos draw a distinction between "pure" Filipinos (an agglomerate of a variety of different ethnic and language groups) and the Chinese, who are actually Chinese-Filipinos. The Chinese are envied because they are believed to be the richest people in the Philippines, and it is they who own the companies, the land, the factories (even the small piecework factories which are to be found around Tugatog). Most people said that the Chinese were wealthy because they "knew how to stick together" and help each other, whereas Filipinos would only exploit their fellow countrymen for short-term gain, without thinking about whether or not that was a wise long-term policy.

[8] During my stay in the Philippines, Manila's power supply gradually improved so that brown-outs, at first an almost daily occurrence, became a rarity.

[9] That is, by strength of personality.

[10] From the term, *balangay*, or boat, a supposed reference to the boats in which Austronesian-speakers originally came to the islands. The present usage, *barangay*, is also the official term for the smallest governmental unit in the Philippines, the level below that of a municipality. Prior to the Marcos regime, these were referred to as *barrios*.

[11] Smoky Mountain was cleared after my fieldwork by order of President Fidel Ramos.

[12] Jeepneys or jeeps are a form of vehicle found nowhere but in the Philippines. A form of public transport, they are privately-owned, but operate on set routes, for which they must be registered with the relevant government authorities. Various models seat between twelve and twenty people, and passengers pay on a distance travelled basis, signalling to the driver when they want to alight.

[13] In order to obtain employment as a security guard or the police, it is generally necessary to have a tertiary degree in Criminology. Like engineering, it can be studied at many of the numerous tertiary institutes dotted around Manila and the rest of the country.

[14] There are a great many illicit weapons in circulation throughout the Philippines, and it does not seem to be too difficult to obtain firearms or explosives. I knew several men who possessed unregistered hand guns, and on one occasion, was shown what I was told was a shell for a rifle-grenade launcher (a weapon used by the Armed Forces of the Philippines).

[15] The creativity and resourcefulness displayed by the urban poor in finding and incorporating a variety of building materials through interpersonal mutual help arrangements has been commented on by a number of writers (for instance, Calinao 1990:39-48; Pinches 1994:19-25; Pinches 1984:98-101; Jocano 1975:14-19).

The various locales recognised by people, such as "Asogue Street", "Bisig" or "the squatters", are reminiscent of the "areas" designating particular communities tied to geographic regions in Tatalon (Pinches 1984:84-89).

[16] In 1994, the Philippine Government announced a plan whereby squatters who had continuously occupied the same tract of land for a number of years could apply for title/ownership. This scheme caused some interest among the Asogue Street residents, who intended to apply by the deadline of mid-1995. I have no further data on this scheme.

[17] This household was relatively affluent by local standards, and so could afford to engage a maid. Home help is cheaper than running labour-saving devices such as clothes washing machines, as opposed to Australia, where the reverse is the case.

In this instance, the maid was the daughter of an old family friend who had fallen on hard times. The maid was considered to be a family member, the family also ensured that she attended secondary school, and basically worked as a nanny and washerwoman in return for her room and board, while still being paid a small retainer.

[18] While economic motives — the search for employment — are the most significant reason for the continued influx of people from the countryside to Metro Manila, the presence of kin in the city make it easier to contemplate for those in the country, and also tends to dictate where they will go once they arrive (see, for instance, Costello, Leinbach & Ulack 1987).

[19] There were a few exceptions, and in these cases the man had met his future spouse in her home province while there on other business, such as visiting distant kin of his own, or because he had been assigned to that region as part of a previous job.

[20] Various creoles based on a melding of two or more languages are supposed to be fairly common in the Philippines. I have also heard of Engalog (again, a meld of Tagalog and English, but with the grammar of the latter language predominating) and Japalog, where

Japanese is used instead of English. However, I did not encounter either of these creoles while in the field.

The main difference between Tagalog and the Philippines' official language, Filipino/Pilipino, is in the expanded set of characters available to the latter. The letters "c", "f" and "ñ" do not exist in Tagalog, at least not officially. However, the real difference between the two is merely a matter of governmental regulation, rather than any concrete dissimilarity in vocabulary or grammar.

[21] Administratively, the Philippines is split into three broad regions: Luzon in the north, Mindanao in the south, and the Visayas in the middle.

[22] The Philippine unit of currency is the *peso* (P), worth 100 *centavos*. At the time of fieldwork, US$1 was worth approximately P26, and AUD$1 was worth about P18.

[23] For more on the household gender and age divisions of labour, see Goss (1990:205-239).

[24] The practice of sending Filipinos to work in distant countries also has severe drawbacks, not least of which are the hardships endured by the workers and their families (who remain in the Philippines). Mistreatment of the workers is rife, and there is a strong undercurrent of discontent among Filipinos who are forced to seek their fortune overseas, because employment options are not to be had in the Philippines. The Philippine Government was rocked by the extent of the outrage shown by common Filipinos over the execution of Gabby Concepcion, who worked as a maid in Singapore. Part of the anger was directed at Singapore for the act, but much of the hostility was towards the people's own government because they felt that, as usual, the elected representatives and diplomats had not extended proper protection or care to the OCWs, who are an important cash earner for the Philippine economy.

Additionally, the cash brought in by OCWs has not led to greater investment in local industry, as was hoped (see, for instance, Go 1986:256). Rather, the money is generally spent on paying off outstanding debts, purchasing imported sumptuary goods (like television sets and karaoke machines), or in setting up the returned OCW (or *balikbayan*) in a small livelihood-generating business, such as a *sari-sari* store or ownership of a taxi or jeepney.

Working overseas is, of course, far more lucrative than paid employment for the same type of work in the Philippines. For instance, Banzon-Bautista (1989:153) found that a construction worker in Saudi Arabia could make $US4500 per annum, compared to $US800 per annum back in the Philippines.

[25] While the residents of Asogue Street use this term in a compassionate way, to emphasise the poverty of those even worse off than themselves, it is also used by the affluent as a derogatory term for the urban poor (Pinches 1984:72).

[26] Although it is true that the southern regions, which were already Islamised, successfully resisted conversion.

[27] It should be remembered that the early Church designated December 25 as the commemorative date of Christ's birth so that it would coincide with the northern European Yule festival, thus rendering it that much easier to appropriate the pagan festival as a Christianised activity. Since many Indios held that there was a highest god (sometimes called Bathala), it was easy enough to redefine this being as the God of Christianity.

[28] Apart from the devastation wrought on the city itself, approximately 100,000 Filipino noncombatants were killed, as a result of both Japanese atrocities and American artillery (Connaughton and Anderson 1995:174).

[29] The building was demolished in September, 1997.

[30] *Kangkong* [*Ipomoea reptans* or *Ipomoea aquatica F.*] is grown for its edible stems and leaves. It is cheap, a common accompaniment to rice and considered by Asogue Street residents to be one of the quintessential foods of the poor.

[31] I mean the *kumpadrazgo* system, which is discussed in Chapter 6.

[32] When a child meets an adult relative or family friend (considered to be quasi-kin) after a long separation, they are customarily expected to "bless" the older person. Actually, the blessing flows from the senior to the junior, but the verb, "to bless" (always the English word) is used in such a way as to refer to the junior as the active individual, and the senior as the passive: "Bless your uncle."

To bless, a child takes the adult's hand and touches the tips of the fingers to the child's forehead. Children are taught to perform this act of respect during infancy.

[33] There is still a large fresh-produce market at Divisoria.

[34] A small citrus fruit, similar in appearance and taste to a lime, but with pale orange flesh. Filipinos sometimes refer to it as an "orange".

[35] For placement to work as either a maid or a nurse: my notes are unclear as to which.

[36] Danny's grandfather may have been a practising *manghihilot*, a healer who specialises in *hilot*, or massage. The treatment is particularly effective for sprains and minor fractures.

[37] A healer who specialises in herbal treatments. The term *asuwang* is also rendered *aswang* in Tagalog.

[38] As Prince (1976:127) has remarked:

> There is an important difference between intellectually assenting to a spirit world and actually communicating with its denizens: between believing that the shaman can suck out one's hurt and actually hallucinating the pathogenic object being removed.

This is the difference between those residents of Asogue Street who really do believe in a particular phenomenon, especially if healers really do believe that they have the powers which they claim for themselves, and those who are willing to accept that the Third Kind exist even though they themselves may have had no direct contact with them.

[39] By "Western", I mean that canon of scientific, literary and folk knowledge which has come out of European (particularly western European) sources. This would include everything from the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen to Einstein and parapsychology.

[40] And outside the scope of materialist science. Ball lightning was a supernatural event, merely a superstition, until sufficient evidence was collected to support its existence. Once it was proved that ball lightning really existed, it became something mundane, of the world (albeit a little-understood aspect of nature). I want to stress that I am not making any claims for the existence or otherwise of the supernatural, merely that I am trying to make a clear distinction between the mundane and the extra-mundane.

[41] I did not find anyone who disagreed with this tripartite division of the world.

Although I use the term "Third Kind" throughout, this should not be taken to imply that it was the most common term used in Asogue Street. Another term for spirits or the Third Kind which appears to have fallen out of use is *anito*.

[42] Not all Third Kind have such dwellings.

[43] During my field work, ABS-CBN (the television station with the largest audience share throughout the Philippines) ran a major competition, which used a computer-generated representation of a rooster, variously described as the "*masuwerteng harimanok*" (lucky *harimanok*) or the "*sarimanok*" as its mascot.

[44] "Abnormality" here is not intended in any perjorative sense.

[45] Latin is believed to be a powerful language, very effective in sorcery or healing. My informants did not speak Latin, but often identified gibberish as being Latin if it was in the context of a prayer, invocation or *Oracion* (spell or prayer).

[46] St Jude: the Roman Catholic patron saint of lost causes and hopeless cases.

[47] I told them, as they had told me, that "to see is to believe", and I had not yet seen any of the Third Kind.

[48] Mount Banahaw has a reputation for being a locus of magical and/or spiritual energy. A number of religious movements, *Rizalistas* especially consider it to be a holy mountain, and typically base their operations near it (Reyes 1975; Foronda 1991:103-111; Lanternari 1965). "Rizalista" is a catch-all phrase which denotes any religious movement which professes that Jose Rizal, the national hero, is to some degree divine. It is occasionally a site of pilgrimage for healers, and, more recently, has become a target for New Age travellers who, knowingly or unknowingly, are following in the footsteps of, not just the healers, but also Theosophy (see, for instance, Cagan 1990:116-157; or for the importance of the Philippine mountain chains to Theosophy, see Steiner 1911).

[49] Mass media representations may be considered analogous to Redfieldian "great traditions" with respect to Filipino (not just Asogue Street) "little traditions" in the ways that they both draw upon, and inform, each other (Redfield 1956:40-59).

[50] *Mang* is a title of respect for older men. The female equivalent is *Aling*.

[51] I do not know the significance of the odours to which Mang Leno referred.

[52] *Duwende* were never considered to act as guardians of societal morality or norms. However, Jocano (1989:19) appears to be arguing the opposite when he states that transgressions of the correct social relations are punished by the supernatural. Firstly, this did not seem to be the case in Asogue Street: attacks by *duwende* were far more arbitrary, or linked to actions which did not appear to be transgressions of any social or moral order. Secondly, it is possible that the Third Kind *does* punish such transgressions, but that this is not necessarily the only reason for the Third Kind to attack humans.

[53] The use of terms such as "king" and "princess" in reference to *duwende* suggests some sort of stratified social organisation among them, at least in the minds of my informants (or, to be more precise, in the minds of the healers who informed my informants and myself).

[54] And of less practical concern than, say, wet season flooding or mosquito swarms.

[55] The most commonly-consumed liquor was La Tondeña gin, which had a wrapper with a picture of St Michael defeating Satan. I was sometimes told, jokingly, that the Devil, having been defeated, was now to be found inside the bottle.

[56] There are numerous other "ghosts" in the Philippines, although they have little to do with the Third Kind. The term "ghost", usually in English, is also used to refer to a variety of scams pulled by businesspersons or governmental agencies to siphon off public funds into apparently useful, but effectively non-existent, projects, with most of the money ending up in their pockets. Since communications in the Philippines are sufficiently poor, and corruption is perceived as widespread, there are a lot of stories about ghost projects.

[57] The *asuwang*, or similar malevolent entities, can be found throughout South East Asia (see Tan 1987:47-49; or Bubandt's discussion of the *suanggi* complex 1995:5-6). Yengoyan (1995:335-336) considers the Philippine *asuwang* to be a synthesis of indigenous spirit beliefs and Spanish Catholic concepts of witchcraft. However, Yengoyan's hypothesis is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[58] *Manananggal*: One who disconnects. Summers (1995 [1928]:251-256) mentions European travellers' reports from the Malay archipelago of around 1900 which refer to the "Penanggalan" or "Penangal", an entity which disconnects at the neck: the head and connected entrails flying off in search of human prey. The two terms are obviously cognate.

[59] Not everyone accepts that Capiz is the home of the *asuwang*: one woman who went there for a visit said that she left her bedroom window at night, but none came to visit. Therefore, she does not believe there are *asuwang* there.

[60] Two *asuwang* were shown being destroyed during a Filipino film. In this case, chilli sauce was poured on to the bottom halves of the two *asuwang*, and the creatures melted. People I asked about this replied that chilli sauce may work in the same way as chillies; however, they would most certainly not melt.

This film also portrayed the *asuwang* as hunting in an urban setting, a rarity in mass media representations of the entity.

[61] To pour *kalamansi* juice over meat publicly can be considered an insult to the cook, since it could be interpreted as a suspicion that the cook is an *asuwang*. Of course, if the cook and the eater are on close terms, then it would not be an insult.

[62] This story was the basis for a short segment in the "Shake, Rattle and Roll" film series.

[63] The distinction between cannibalism and the *asuwang* is a little blurred. While all *asuwang*, being essentially human, are cannibals, not all cannibals are *asuwang*. However, anyone who displays cannibalistic tendencies would also be suspected of being an *asuwang*, and having their special powers. While surveying residents of Asogue Street to determine whether particular foods were considered medicinally hot, cold or neutral, I suggested human flesh as a theoretical item of consumption. Several people responded with mock horror, "What do you think I am, an *asuwang*?"

[64] The *balete* tree is also often the home of other Third Kind.

[65] Although the people who showed me the article were probably having a joke at my expense (they have no belief in what their newspapers tell them, especially about domestic matters), there were others who took the article at face value. Readers of tabloid newspapers put little stock in what is reported about Philippine affairs; however, many are far more credulous when it comes to international matters.

[66] The particular priest (whom I never met) was greatly disliked by my neighbours: they later remarked to me that he was usually too busy playing *mah jongg* to attend to their spiritual

needs. When I asked why they did not complain to the bishop, they reminded me (yet again) that, as poor people, nobody in authority was going to listen to them over one of their own.

[57] And of the living: I was told that squatters who lacked any other alternative lived among the family tombs.

[58] As an ex-government employee — school caretaker — Lolo Badong received a pension similar to superannuation, usually referred to as "insurance" [E].

[69] My notes do not record how *sakla* was played. Although Filipinos love to play games of luck and skill, and love to gamble, I was only able to master *mah jong*: the various card games, which I suspect are based on Spanish games (*Puso'y Dos* [Heart is Two], *Quadro de Jack* [Four Jacks]), were beyond my ken.

[70] *Bombays*: a colloquial term for Indian businesspeople (usually men) who specialised in providing loans. I have very little information on the *bombays*, since none lived near me or were on friendly terms with my neighbours.

Their loans are called "five-six", based on the usual interest rate charged: 20%, or six pesos return for every five loaned. The repayments are made on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis and are generally considered all but impossible to meet. It was commonly held that the *bombays* are expert at manipulating the rates or times of payment collections so as to squeeze more money than the 20% extra nominally charged. To take out a five-six loan was to be at the financial end of the line because, although everyone was aware of the near-impossibility of paying off such loans rapidly, it meant that the need for immediate cash had outweighed the later problems of the interest. All *bombays* were considered to be wealthy and were respected, envied and despised, much like the Chinese.

[71] "Modern" and "progressive" are two English terms occasionally used by Filipinos to describe something as being in some way beneficial to society or society's economic well-being. They are conceptual absolutes, in that something which is "progressive" or "modern" is "good" for Filipinos, without the nature of that goodness being explored or questioned, much less criticised.

Lest I seem to be painting too one-sided a picture of Filipino attitudes to progress, I should also point out that people did at times question such forms of "progress" as Government-sponsored birth-control programs; or the side-effects of progress, such as pollution and the social problems prevalent in Australia, which they considered to be one of the most progressive countries in the world.

[72] In the yearly ritual cycle of the Catholic Church, October 31 is actually All Saints' Day, while November 1 is All Souls' Day, the day in which Catholics should remember the souls of all the dead, particularly those in Purgatory. My informants merely referred to November 1 as All Saints' and October 31 as Halloween.

[73] *Maysakit! Aray!*: ["I'm sick/it hurts! Ouch!"]

[74] According to Foster and Anderson (1978:60), quoting Hart (1969:62): "Today humoral pathology underlies much folk medicine in Malaysia, Java...and the Philippines. In the Philippines these beliefs appear to be the result of Spanish influence, by way of Mexico and the Manila galleon." On the other hand, the hot-cold distinction is to be found throughout mainland and peninsular South East Asia, and may have originated with Chinese concepts of humoural medicine (see, for instance, Leslie 1974:75; Barrett & Lucas 1993). Of course, the similarity in humoural systems displays a variety of variations: Laderman (1994; 1991:15-39) finds that rural east coast peninsular Malays consider heat to be destructive. In this case, one aims for coolness, which is synonymous with well-being. Manderson

(1996:24-25) mentions humoral patent medicines sold by European pharmaceutical firms to other Europeans in Malaya in the late 19th Century.

[75] On this occasion we were consuming liquor which, as a hot food, should have counteracted the cold seafood. However, nobody mentioned this to me at the time.

[76] I do not think that they were considered to be hot foods because of their scarcity or expense. Rather, the reverse was the case: since such foods were hot and thus highly prized, this was one of the factors which forced their price up and their availability down.

[77] Although evening air and dew were considered to be dangerous to mothers, the cool air of morning carried no such risk. This may be because the cool part of the morning is a prelude to the day, which is not as dangerous to the health as the night. Remember that eating cold foods at night is considered dangerous, but no such problems are attached to the consumption of those same foods during the day, except where there is a particularly marked imbalance of the intake of cold over hot foods.

[78] Guava leaves are believed to have considerable curative properties: smoke from the leaves, or a poultice made from the leaves themselves, are said to speed up the healing of broken skin. Traditionally, a freshly-circumcised penis is wrapped in the leaves for several days to aid the healing process. Drinking tea made from guava leaves is an effective treatment for diarrhoea.

[79] I tried this remedy after coming down with prickly heat. I cannot say that my *bungang araw* cleared up, but the cool water was soothing. Although I got no real relief, my standing semi-naked in a rain shower with a bar of soap in one hand provided comic relief for many of the neighbours.

[80] I am not certain why she had been sent to the hospital to give birth, since both indigenous and hospital-trained midwives are commonly available. However, birthing in hospital is not unheard-of, particularly if the pregnancy has been difficult or other complications are expected. Cost is a limiting factor, although I am unsure whether hospitals are considered to be in some way superior or cleaner than home births.

[81] This is not altogether true. In theory, garbage is regularly collected by a municipal vehicle. In practice, that vehicle (and its drivers) are never seen, except at Christmas time. At Christmas, it is customary to give service providers such as postal officers a small gift of money — they approach with their palms open and say, "*Papasko...*" ("For Christmas"). A few days before Christmas the garbage collectors drove into Asogue Street in their vehicle and went from house to house collecting money for Christmas (since we did not know the exact day they would come, there was little garbage for them to collect). When I asked why people gave them money when they had not been seen all year, everyone laughed, shrugged and said, "That's the way it is here — and we can't afford to offend anyone."

Metro Manila Aides, in their distinctive red and gold uniforms, can often be seen clearing rubbish away from the main thoroughfares throughout the city. Once or twice they came down Asogue Street — during an election.

[82] Heavy marketing, truthful in the letter, if not the spirit, of the law, has been employed by multinational producers of infant formula and other milk products throughout the developing world (see, for instance, Robinson 1986; Muller 1975).

[83] Flavier resigned as DOH Secretary in time to run for the 1995 elections. He was successfully elected; however, I have as yet no data on what has become of the *Libreng Sangkap* program.

[84] For an overview of public health programs and associated problems in the Philippines, see Tiglao & Cruz (1975).

[85] This tree eventually drowned during the wet season. I later discovered that no one believed in the White Lady which was supposed to reside in, or near, it; rather, children were told it was haunted, partly for fun — exciting the children with ghost stories — and partly as an admonition not to go outside alone at night, since the White Lady might get them. This particular White Lady should not be confused with the spirit which was widely believed to roam Asogue Street.

Although it was probably only a children's story, it was still meaningful to informants in that it was believable: both adults and children accepted the possibility of White Ladies inhabiting trees, otherwise the story would make no sense to them, either as a ghost tale or as a warning about what might happen if children did not behave properly.

In a similar vein, two young boys — who had a reputation for being naughty and constantly went out to play in the street at night — were warned by a shopkeeper that there were many *asuwang* around, and they would be in danger of they did not behave. When they asked whether or not the *Amerikano* (myself) was not afraid of *asuwang*, the shopkeeper replied that, on the contrary, *asuwang* were afraid of my white skin. Of course, this is merely a children's story: skin colour is no protection against *asuwang*, but it seemed to satisfy the children's curiosity.

[86] The *barong tagalog* is a long-sleeved shirt, worn loose, which is often used by men on formal occasions. They are usually white, and may have intricate designs. "Authentic" *barongs* are made from *nipa* cloth, which is woven from coconut leaf fibre. A polo *barong* is a short-sleeved version.

[87] The *Espiritistas*, or *Union Espiritista Christiana*, is a Philippine-based spiritualist movement which draws on the traditions of North American and European spiritualism. During meetings, *Espiritista* mediums are possessed by a spirit (often the Holy Ghost), who is able to heal the sick.

[88] *Tawas* and guava as remedies are discussed in Chapter 6.

[89] According to Tan (1987:34-35), Western medical studies of *bangungot* have focused on the possibility that the dream is triggered by diet. Tan cites evidence that such studies have been inconclusive.

[90] The two people mentioned above were highly religious, at least in the sense that they took Bible study classes and regularly attended Mass, unlike most other people I met in the Philippines. Almost everybody believed in the Holy Trinity of Christianity, and most had a special reverence for the Virgin Mary; however, few people displayed the usual behaviour normally associated with Catholicism, such as regular church attendance. This was not the case with those who had converted to other Christian denominations; their religious attendance was usually much more marked and regular.

[91] *Mangkukulam* were rumoured to use dolls shaped to resemble their intended victims. By jabbing parts of the doll with a needle, they were able to cause sickness or pain in the corresponding body part of the real person. I suspect that the stories of these dolls may reflect a borrowing of Western representations of Haitian magical practices.

[92] Although both the cited examples feature women as sorcerers and sorcery victims, no such gender bias existed in Filipino conceptions of *kulam*. I did not notice any specific preponderance of men or women in any of the stories I was told, nor did my informants ever volunteer the idea that women were more often sorcerers than men. The bias exists in my reporting merely because these are the two stories for which I have the most detail;

moreover, I was personally acquainted with the victims in both cases, unlike most of the other, second-hand, examples of *kulam* that I collected.

[93] According to the research undertaken by Jocano (1973:47-48) in the Laguna area of southern Luzon, *usog* is caused by a "bad wind" which emanates from the body of a spiritually powerful individual or from the Third Kind. *Usog* here may include body pains, stomach aches, fever and possibly madness. Tan (1987:21) states that *usug* [i.e. *usog*] is caused by people with a "strong life force".

[94] Native healers are those curative specialists who operate outside of Western medical regimes, and more-or-less within more indigenous traditions of beliefs pertaining to sickness causation and cure. I use the terms "native healer" or "indigenous healer" interchangeably.

[95] The use of home remedies to treat minor illnesses and Western pharmaceuticals to treat more serious ailments has also been found elsewhere. In Vietnam, for instance:

> As a general rule, minor illnesses are more often treated with traditional medicines, as are ailments whose cause the Vietnamese attribute to elemental imbalance. Western medicine is used to treat more serious diseases as it is considered to work more rapidly and be more powerful. (Ladinsky, Volk and Robinson 1987:1108)

By contrast, Hardon (1991:38-42) found that pharmaceuticals were over-used:

> "[P]eople in the Philippines on the one hand are dying unnecessarily of preventable and curable diseases, and on the other hand are over-using modern pharmaceuticals in the treatment of their health problems.

[96] Although the Manila water supply is considered to be reasonably safe by those who regularly drink it, at least one family bought a water purifier because they felt the drinking water was unsafe for their children.

[97] Informants occasionally referred to a particular commodity by one or two common brand names. Although over-the-counter medications were most often referred to in this way, it was also not unusual to hear other items called by brand, rather than generic, names. For instance, toothpaste was sometimes called "colgate".

[98] I am unsure as to whether this is a mineral or a plant.

[99] Of course, pharmaceuticals were of no use in combating illnesses caused by the Third Kind or sorcery. These were mainly of use when *mikrobia* or the environment (i.e. "natural" illnesses) were to blame.

[100] For a list of the categories of native healers found in a coastal area of Pangasinan province, see Hagey (1980:77-78).

[101] Although I did not encounter this in my field site, people were also said to go on pilgrimage to various sites in the Philippines which were reputed to have healing powers, such as the Catholic church at Manaoag, Pangasinan. On pilgrimages for healing, see Worsley (1982:333); Turner & Turner (1978); but see also Sallnow (1981).

[102] If the boundaries between specialisations were as blurred in Western medicine as they are among native healers, then it would be possible to visit the dentist for a treatment of a mild case of angina.

[103] With midwifery forming the fourth body of knowledge.

[104] Both healers and clients agreed on this point. See also Connor (1990:352-353) on spirit mediums being called to their vocation through illness and divine inspiration.

[105] The healer or shaman who learned of their calling through sickness, or who had to heal themselves in order to heal others (whether the sickness was of the body or a moral shortcoming) is a recurring theme cross-culturally (see, for instance, Kalweit 1992:1; Connor 1990:352-353).

[106] The other healers were almost always senior family members.

[107] Of course, there is an expectation that one will pay something to a healer, although no one would ever admit to feeling unspoken pressure.

[108] During fieldwork I quickly discovered that the best day to watch a healer treating clients was Friday: this was the day when I could be almost certain that a healer would have patients. Even if the healers did not perceive their power as varying during the week, clients preferred to visit on Tuesdays and Fridays if they could.

[109] Which could also be referred to as "post-Enlightenment thought", the ascendancy of materialism, "progress" and "rationality" (especially their incarnation in the West).

[110] Healers, too, were generally happy to coexist with the *doktors*, and readily pointed out that there were certain illnesses which they were incapable of treating, and that for these, people should see a Western-style doctor. They told me that, if they suspected that a person was suffering from such an illness (especially typhoid or tuberculosis), they would always refer them to a *doktor*. However, the healers also emphasised that there were certain things that Western medicine was unable to deal with adequately, and these maladies fell within the province of the native healer.

[111] The ability to heal at a distance is not uncommon, and several healers have claimed to be able to effect cures simply through praying on repeated occasions over someone's photograph.

[112] In cases where the client was a male, I (as a foreign observer and student of the healers) was often invited to watch behind the screen.

[113] The tendency to assume that masked symptoms represent a cure is hardly unique to Filipinos.

[114] She told me that these gardens were compulsory: the Philippine government required schools to plant and maintain them.

[115] This herb, *lagundi*, is quite effective in drying out the sinus passages when one has a head cold. It is drunk as a tea, and I can personally vouch for its effectiveness.

[116] One of the most commonly-consumed fish is *bangus*, or milkfish, the flesh of which contains a large number of small bones.

[117] In Pangasinan, the *alay* is known as a *gaton* [P], and is customarily presided over by a *manggagaton* [P], or specialist in the conduct of this ritual. It may involve pigs, chickens, liquor, cigarettes, given as offerings to the offended spirit, and then the remains are consumed by the human participants in the feast. One occurred a few weeks before I visited friends in the area, but I was unable to collect more data, except that the sick woman recovered very soon after the *gaton*.

[118] In particular, sects such as Aimee Semple Macpherson's Foursquare Church, with its table-thumping evangelism which was the inspiration for the televised ministries of Jerry Falwell or Jim and Tammy Bakker's PTL.

[119] I suspect these members were mainly Filipino Overseas Contract Workers.

[120] Also known to Filipinos by their alternative names, "fake healers" and "quack doctors". These terms are also applied to the more common native healers, but much more rarely.

[121] See, for instance, Licauco (1981a; 1981b); McDowall (1993); Stelter (1976); Lava and Araneta (1982).

[122] The symbol of the "All-Seeing Eye of God" in Freemasonry, also represented on the U.S. $1 bill.

[123] Neighbours exhibited an ambivalent attitude towards their co-nationals' reputed behaviour with regards to foreigners. It was deplored, in that most people felt that, no matter how poor Filipinos might be, this did not justify their stealing from or cheating foreigners (who were perceived as being uniformly wealthy, which in relative terms we all were). At the same time, it was understandable, since everyone had to make a living and feed their families: at root, the rorting of foreigners was considered to be an effect of poverty, which was widely seen as resulting from the perceived incompetence, corruption and greed of their own government. No one ever suggested to me that confidence tricksters were in any way heroic or to be admired; however, as a foreigner, it is possible that any such attitudes might have been concealed from me.

[124] And this variety of differing opinions and cultural backgrounds (traditions) would, in Asogue Street, also include middle class Australia, since I was occasionally asked for my opinions and diagnoses of various ailments.

[125] In this chapter I refer to "Manila" to stand for the whole of Metro Manila, rather than the municipality of that name.

[126] Stone (1973) argues that Filipinos do not recognise public space as belonging to everyone. Instead, unoccupied space (even the middle of a highway) "belongs" to the person who currently occupies it, until such time as they cease temporary or permanent occupancy.

[127] Readers may have noticed an ongoing theme: the distant provinces and the past are indeed almost synonymous with each other, as compared with present-day, here-and-now Asogue Street. Rather than an attempt on the part of informants to highlight the backwardness of the past and the distant through "denial of coevalness" (to use Fabian's [1983:36-69] term), I suspect they were merely stating the fact that they lacked the knowledge base to deal with the Third Kind in the present and the near.

[128] As one woman explained to me, white males are the most desired partners: they are automatically wealthy (particularly if from the United States, but other Caucasians are only slightly less so) and white skin is highly-prized. Asians are considered to be only slightly less wealthy, with slightly less attractive skin tones and are not as gentle as husbands. Filipino males come in third, while black males are at the bottom of the list. Men from the Middle East were not mentioned by my informant.

[129] The 1994 civil war in Yemen attracted a great deal of attention in the Philippine press because of the OCWs stationed there (who had to be rescued by the Philippine military). At the same time, very few people I questioned had ever heard of the situation in Bosnia (some were unaware that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist).

[130] These concepts have been discussed in some detail in Philippine studies literature. See, for instance, Kaut (1961); Lynch (1970:10-17); Hollnsteiner (1970); Guthrie (1971:61-64); Jocano (1989:15-17); and Kikuchi (1989:30-31). Manlove (1990:520) has emphasised the differential resource bases of donor and recipient within *utang na loob* relationships — I would add that "resources" may cover more than the fiscal or access to power, since a child owes such a debt to her or his mother simply for being alive.

[131] This includes being ashamed by the inadequacy of one's dwelling, poor command of English, and so on.

[132] Children were instructed to refer to me as *kuya* Peter, a title signifying an elder brother.

[133] Apart from the fiscally-rewarding visits to godparents, children are also entitled to bless any adult they come across on Christmas Day. The adult is expected to give them small monetary gifts, usually between P1 and P10, depending on the child's age, in return for the blessing (of course, strangers are excluded). What with the carolling during the two weeks prior to December 25, small gifts from adults and more significant sums from godparents (P50 to P100 or even P200 are not unheard of), Christmas is quite a lucrative period for children around Asogue Street. As several adults said to me while handing out the cash, "Christmas is for children, but New Year's is for adults."

[134] Filipinos occasionally address complete strangers as *pare*. This is a less intimate use, similar to calling a stranger "buddy" or "mate".

[135] Just as men are constantly reaffirming their roles as good kin, good friends, good neighbours and good members of the community on the stage of the street, so too are children forming and reaffirming friendships that, as they grow older, will form the basis for age-matehood, "old friends" and *kumpadres* and *kumares*.

[136] In order to make the gin more palatable (it is quite difficult to drink), a small amount of beer is sometimes purchased and mixed in with the gin and some cracked ice. The resulting brew is referred to as "beer-gin" (E) which, because of the way in which Filipinos pronounce English, is indistinguishable from their pronunciation of the word "virgin" [E]. This confusion of terms is sometimes the basis of ribald joking.

[137] The *tanggero*, or "one who pours out the shots", is also called the "gunner", a play on "shots".

[138] In the mass media, the *barkada* of fictional characters (especially if they were middle-class or wealthy) were occasionally depicted as consisting of men and women. I never saw a mixed group being referred to as a *barkada* by my informants. They were surprised when I told them that my *barkada* in Australia consisted of both men and women who often drank together.

It is also possible to have more than one *barkada*: Nog-nog, for instance, has a *barkada* in Asogue Street (mainly comprising family and neighbours), another in the nearby precinct of Bisig, yet another near the Sangandaan Market, and finally one in his home province of Zambales. Most *barkada* consist of kin, longtime friends and neighbours, and are tied to locations where these people are (Nog-nog designated each of his *barkada* geographically when I asked him about them); however, one's workmates can also be a *barkada*, although this would still be tied to a location (in this case, place of work).

[139] For instance, one would never belong to the same *barkada* as one's own father: the need to constantly show deference and respect to the older man would too obviously destroy the atmosphere of *pakikisama*. On occasion, fathers and sons did drink together, but this was usually for festive events, and never as a regular thing.

[140] Indeed, the term *malungkot* [sad] was sometimes used as a synonym for *nagiisa* [alone].

[141] Excepting guests from outside of Asogue Street, few individuals had a higher social status by virtue of holding positions in the government structure. Rather, some people were accorded respect because of their experience. People held varying amounts of social esteem, rather than social rank (Guinness 1986:69-82).

[142] Their gifts tended to be slightly more expensive, in keeping with their relatively greater wealth.

[143] I call this an aspect of "Philippine culture", rather than siting it specifically in Asogue Street, because I encountered it everywhere in my travels through Luzon and Panay. So regularly did I meet people who subscribed, or at least paid lip-service, to the ideal of hospitality, that I came to expect it. I was never disappointed.

Admittedly, my presence as a foreigner and guest in any household brought those people great honour in front of their neighbours. At least, this is what I was told on numerous occasions, so it may be that hospitality was displayed much more avidly for my benefit. However, I believe that this does not mean that Filipinos would tend to be inhospitable to each other — most appeared to take too much delight in playing the generous host for this to be likely.

[144] Since I left the field, the home in which I stayed has had a telephone installed.

[145] Whether or not the sorcerer in this case learned her trade after leaving Asogue Street s not known. It is also worth mentioning that questions of sorcerous attacks from a distance aside, it is much less likely to cause social friction in a *kapitbahayan* if accusations of sorcery are directed at people who are absent and unlikely to return, rather than current neighbours.

[146] Although they may come back cynical, robbed or, in one case of which I am aware, deranged.

[147] Of course, it should be stressed that the informal activities which provide the basis for subsistence for most people — *becak* driving, food stalls, day labouring — are highly visible and vulnerable. More seriously illicit activites, such as drug dealing, are apparently not so threatened by increased police activity.

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